Sydney H. Bourne

JOURNAL OF A SOMERSET RECTOR

Howard Coombs

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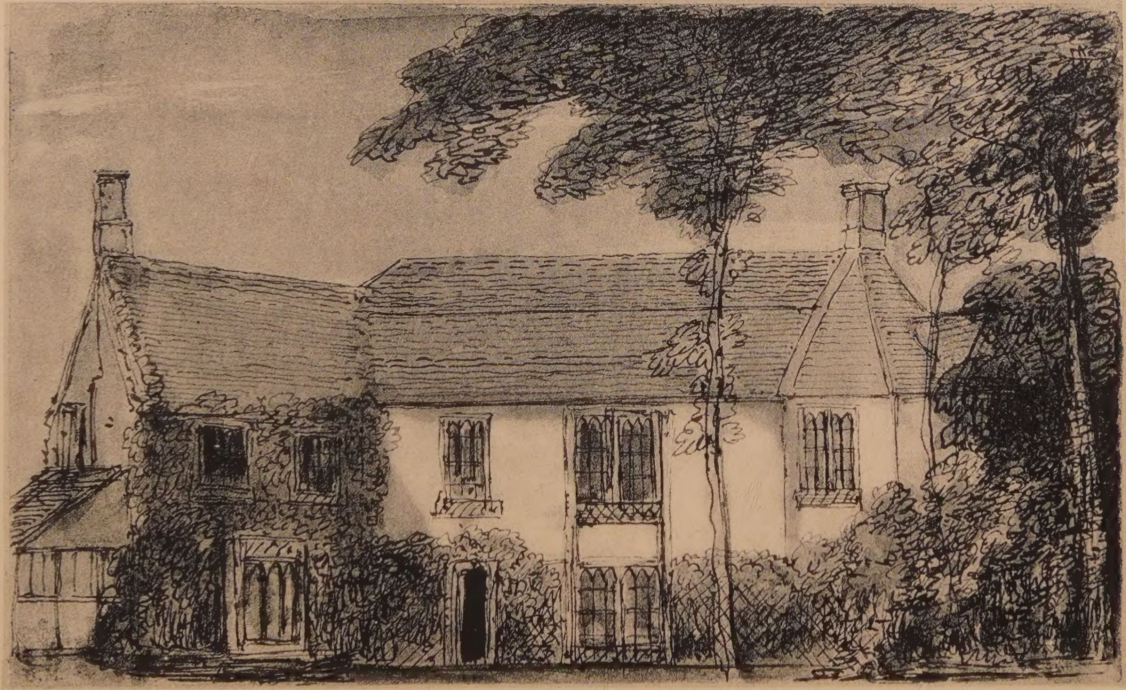

Camerton Parsonage

as it was when the Journal was written

JOURNAL OF A SOMERSET RECTOR

JOHN SKINNER, A.M., ANTIQUARY
1772—1839

PAROCHIAL AFFAIRS OF THE PARISH OF
CAMERTON, 1822—1832

BRITISH MUSEUM MSS., Nos. 33673—33728

EDITED BY HOWARD COOMBS
AND
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MEMORANDUM

(As I have mentioned in my Will) It is my desire that my executors, the Rev. Richard Boodle of Radstock, and the Rev. John Hammond of Priston, as soon after my death as convenient apply to Sir Henry Ellis, of the BRITISH MUSEUM, and tell him that event has taken place, and that I have commissioned them to deliver up the MSS. vols. specified in my Will, in number one hundred and fifty, containing journals and productions of various kinds, but chiefly on the subject of antiquities, with the chests in which they are deposited and with the keys thereof, for the sole use and benefit of the BRITISH MUSEUM and the public in general.

My wish and request that no extracts might be taken from these books till *fifty years* after my death alone proceeded from the fear of giving offence by the free remarks made when writing on passing events.

As the Rev. Messrs. Boodle and Hammond may not so conveniently spare time to see the books delivered themselves into the custody of Sir H. Ellis, I should wish my son, F. Owen Skinner, would take the charge, who being settled in London may better fulfil it.

JOHN SKINNER.

CAMERTON PARSONAGE,
NEAR BATH, SOMERSET.
August 13, 1839.

PREFACE

The Rev. John Skinner, the author of the voluminous Journal, of which this book contains some extracts, was a Somerset clergyman. He lived later than John Woodforde, whose journal has been so widely read, and his outlook and interests were very different. He belonged to a generation untouched by the Oxford Movement, but he held a view of the responsibilities of his office which is far higher than that usually ascribed to his age by writers of Church history. There is good reason too to think that this higher ideal was shared by some of his friends. The memory of one of them at least is even to this day honoured in the parish in which he worked. Skinner wrote steadily under the inspiration of a favourite motto:

Nulla dies sine Linea
Since life so soon must close, would we retain
The hope of living to our friends again?
Let each succeeding day which speeds so fast
Afford some leisure to record the past—
To note with pencil, or describe with pen,
The works of Nature or the ways of men,
So that, when summoned from this changeful scene,
These records may declare we once have been,
Nor purblind loitered on the arduous road
Which leads, through Nature's works, to Nature's God.

Skinner's handwriting was almost illegible, but the Journal was transcribed by his brother, Russell, who devoted much labour to the task. He transcribed at the rate of 25 pages a day, or upwards of 5,000 words, but not always without incurring his brother's criticism. It was an ill day for the Journal when he died in December 1832.

The volumes of the Journal are largely filled with sketches and records of tours, mostly of little general interest, for if he visited the British Museum he would begin to catalogue its contents, and his notes on the places through which he passed are mainly of the guide-book description. Hundreds of pages are filled with archæological detail and theory, mostly dead stuff, but the Parochial Journal, where it exists, throws much light on the life of a Somerset village at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

There are in the British Museum, in addition to some collections of letters, ninety-eight volumes of the Journal. The discrepancy between this number and that mentioned in the directions he left for his executors seems to be accounted for in part by the binding of two or more volumes in one, and perhaps by the rejection of later volumes which had not been transcribed.

In December 1839, the Rev. John Skinner, Rector of Camerton, died by his own hand among the bare beech trees in the hanging wood hard by his home. A few days later his body was laid to rest in the same grave as that of the gentle lady, his much-loved wife, whose death had sowed the seeds of the tragedy of that winter day twenty-seven years after. His executors were already acquainted with a purpose which he had formed many years before to preserve for posterity a Journal on which he had spent much time and labour. Among his papers they found the following instructions, written in August 1839:

"I bequeath all the books to the British Museum for my countrymen's benefit. May they know how to value such a territory as this as it ought to be valued, and unite in maintaining its ancient institutions inviolate till the last. England, I love thee still!

JOHN SKINNER."

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

"DURING the time my mother resided at Claverton House, which was upwards of seven years, having myself relinquished the profession of the Law, I read for Orders, and with great earnestness and perseverance spent not less than ten hours of the day in my study. Mr. Graves, the Rector of the Church, being old and infirm and nearly blind, gave me a title for Orders, and I served the Church for a year before I took the curacy of South Brent." With these words the Rev. John Skinner, the writer of the Journal, introduces himself to his readers. Few facts have survived about his early life. His mother, whose maiden name was Mary Page, drew up a list of her books, which is still in the possession of the Rector of Camerton. It is written in a beautifully legible hand, and if she read the books which she collected, she must have been a lady of some culture. Mary Page was born at Tottenham High Cross, Middlesex, and married a Mr. Russell Skinner, of Newtown House, Lymington, a descendant of Robert Skinner (1591–1670), successively Bishop of Bristol, Oxford, and Worcester. Their son John was born in 1772, and was educated at Cheam, and at Trinity College, Oxford, which he entered on November 16, 1790, graduating B.A. in 1794, and M.A. in 1797. He has left some record in verse of his Oxford experiences, of which his account of a day at Trinity in the winter of 1792 is of very considerable interest, and will be found printed as an appendix.

In 1794 he went to Lincoln's Inn. Though he did not long pursue the profession of the Law, the training seems to have left some mark upon his character which did not make for his future happiness.

The Rev. Richard Graves, who gave him his title, was a man of some note, and was from 1750 to 1804

Rector of the beautiful village of Claverton, in the valley of the Avon, about three miles from Bath. Claverton had been the home of Ralph Allen, the original of Fielding's *Squire Allworthy*. Old as he was when Skinner came under his influence, Graves must have done much to form the views and tastes of the younger man. Skinner attributes to him the early bias his mind received for the study of antiquities, and perhaps his want of sympathy with Methodism was also due to Graves, who had satirised it in "A Spiritual Quixote." John Skinner was ordained Deacon in 1797 and Priest in 1799 by Dr. Charles Moss, Bishop of Bath and Wells, and has left us a brief notice of his ordination, which was the prelude to an excursion through Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall.

On the evening of September 20, 1797, he left his mother's house at Claverton, accompanied by Le Marquis de Kermel, a French emigrant, designing to reach Wells to sleep, but they were detained the night at Old Down Inn, six miles short of their intended stage, by rain. Early the next morning they crossed the bleak Mendip Hills and breakfasted with his brother William at Wells.

Skinner was afterwards examined for Priests' Orders by the Subdean, Mr. Moss, who desired him to preach the Ordination Sermon the following Sunday. He spent the rest of Thursday in perambulating the quiet town with his companion until dinner-time, and the evening in a visit to Wookey Hole. The next three days were employed in composing and preaching the Ordination Sermon, and on September 25, having taken leave of his companion, who returned to Bath, he left Wells at twelve, having been detained this long to receive his paper of ordination from the Bishop.

In the autumn of 1799 John Skinner resigned his curacy at Claverton to take up one at South Brent. He approached his new parish in a way which should ensure at least some measure of respect in a country village. Brent Knoll, at one time an island, is a conspicuous hill rising from the moors near the mouth of the Parrett, in Somerset. "Having learned," he tells us, "that I might ascend the Knoll on horseback, and get to Mr. Phelps's house on the opposite side by only leaping one hedge, I took that direction."

John Skinner did not stay long at Brent Knoll. In 1800 his uncle, the Rev. John Haggard, Rector of Bennington, Herts, assured him "a comfortable independence by purchasing" for him the living of Camerton, and thither he removed in the spring of that year.

Camerton is a picturesque village about six miles from Bath, on the edge of the Somerset coalfield. Through its development the population of the parish was trebled during Skinner's incumbency, and that coal-mining was the standard industry is illustrated by the fact that at that time not infrequently every one of the eight entries in a page in the Baptismal Register is that of a child of a collier.

His predecessor, the Rev. John Prowse, had held the living for fifty-one years, and during his long incumbency things had perhaps gone a little awry. John Skinner has put on record on some blank pages of a Parish Register some of the problems he had to face. Unhappily he carried with him to Camerton too much of the lawyer's instinct, developed by his early training, for either his complete happiness or success as a country parson. He found the parsonage in a very dilapidated state. The old Manor House of Camerton was too close to the Church and Rectory. In after years the Jarrett family, who derived much of their wealth from the West Indies, pulled down the old house, and built, at a distance from the Church, the stately Camerton Court.

To the Squire of the day, a Mr. Stephens, from whom the Jarretts inherited the property, it seemed a simpler solution to offer a new site for the Rectory and £300 towards building a new house, on condition that the site of the existing one was made over to him. After mature deliberation John Skinner declined the proposal; but as, on his own reckoning, it cost him first and last upwards of £1,000 to repair, or rather almost to rebuild, his house, it seems to have been a want of statesmanship to refuse an offer which might well have been of advantage to the Rector, and might have removed a fruitful source of friction.

As life went on Skinner came to regard his home as a Naboth's vineyard and his Squire as Ahab, and in time this feeling grew almost to an obsession. Nor was this all. A little investigation in the Parish Register brought to light an encroachment on the churchyard which had been connived at, and must be looked to.

Here we have the key to many of the troubles of John Skinner's life. In those days squires had power, and sometimes used it without scruple to further their own interests. The John Prowses purchased peace by calling Overseers and Churchwardens to witness that things were as authority wished them to be, and left to their successors diminished rights for Church and Rectory. John Skinner resisted and led a troubled life. He never lacked courage, and he was truly conscientious in his decisions. "I have held the living now upwards of thirty years," he wrote towards the end of his life, "and I have never, either through fear or favour, given up one of the rights which belonged to the Rectory."

In 1805 John Skinner married Anna, daughter of a Mr. Holmes of Edmonton. In rapid succession five children were born of the union: (1) Laura, in 1806; (2) Fitz Owen, in 1808; (3) Anna, in 1809; (4) Joseph Henry, in 1810; and lastly Eliza Tertia, in 1811, who died as an infant. Of these only two survived him—Fitz Owen, who entered at Lincoln's Inn and became a barrister, and Anna, who married William Robert Augustus Boyle, of Lincoln's Inn.

For five brief years John Skinner found great happiness, and then the shadows began to close in around his life and never passed again. In 1809 his elder brother Fitz Owen, who was in the Navy and in command of a sloop, showed the grave symptom of spitting blood, and was carried off by his brother to their mother's house in Hertfordshire, where he was tenderly nursed by John

Skinner and his sisters Eliza and Emma. Fitz Owen died in his brother's arms on May 23, 1810, but not before he had passed on the infection to his sisters, who died soon after. John Skinner hurried home to find his wife, who had also paid a long visit to Hertfordshire, "very poorly and bad." Early in 1811 his wife gave birth to a daughter, who died of consumption at the age of three months, and then there quickly followed the great tragedy of his life.

On November 28 "I quitted my house at Camerton to accompany my dear Anne to Clifton; her cough and oppression at the chest having so much increased, I became very anxious to procure her the best advice in my power, and a warmer and drier situation than the parsonage before the winter set in. We took lodgings therefore on St. Vincent's Parade, near the Well House, and immediately sent for Dr. Garrick, a physician we had heard highly spoken of." Skinner's mind was full of apprehensions, both from what he had witnessed in Fitz Owen's case and from the rather discouraging tone of the doctor. He sought distraction as usual, however, in long walks, and in viewing the antiquities and sights of the neighbourhood.

As winter passed into spring they moved their lodgings nearer to the Down, as Mrs. Skinner could no longer bear the fatigue of getting into a carriage. "Never did I witness such perfect resignation; not a sigh, not a murmur escapes her. The loss of our infant she bears with unshaken fortitude; indeed, she told me she daily offered up her most grateful thanks to the Almighty that He was pleased to take it to Him, as, should she herself be taken from me, there would be less anxiety on my mind."

Every moment was now devoted to her, except when he went to the market or for a walk on the Down.

"All her thoughts, which have anything to do with this world, are now directed to me; she declares that the only wish she has to live longer is that she may continue to console me, and when she thinks how desolate I shall be, if left alone amidst the ill-disposed people of Camerton, without any friends to whom I may confide my cares, or who may soothe my mind when too much irritated by their misconduct, she feels indeed most wretched, and hopes and begs she may be spared."

As the days drew on and hope waned, her great desire was that "she may be permitted to continue till June 17, our wedding day. But it was not to be, and the end came very soon." Here is the story of the last hours.

"I hinted that Susan had better sleep in the next room in case she should want her in the night. Looking at me, she said, 'John, you have all along been my nurse at night, and I don't want any other. I dare say when I get to sleep I shall have as good a night as usual.' I went to bed about twelve, and she slept pretty tranquilly after taking about fifteen drops of laudanum. About two I gave her some soda-water, and she seemed to sleep again; a little after she awoke, and began to cough. Finding that she did so with more difficulty than usual I supported her head, and she breathed her last without a sigh or a struggle; for, on ringing the bell for Susan, thinking she had fainted, she never stirred more, and when her sister Harriet came into the room she was quite dead. In compliance with dear Anne's injunctions, Susan alone was with her to perform what was requisite. I went out for two hours as soon as the day began to dawn on the Down; returning, I visited the corpse in order to satisfy myself that every proper attention had been paid, and to bid farewell to all that was earthly of my dearest friend."

"On May 15 Mr. Stephens and Harriet accompanied the hearse from Clifton to Camerton, and I attended her remains to the grave, Mr. Barter performing the service. Although I had endeavoured to prepare my mind for this occasion, it entirely overcame me, and on the 20th, my friends leaving me and taking little Laura with them, I was quite alone; but still the Comforter was with me."

For seven brief years Skinner knew what love and sympathy can do to shield and cheer, and then death claimed his wife. In Camerton Churchyard stands a small altar tomb, bearing on its east side the following inscription:

Hic Jacet
ANNA SKINNER
obiit
A.D. MDCCCXII.

Tu secura jaces
Nobis reliquisti querelas
Praeisti hospitium dulce
Parare tuis
Vale sed non in aetern.
Vale charissima Anna.

In May of the next year (1813) he was summoned to Hertfordshire by the death of his uncle, John Haggard, now ninety years of age, the old gentleman to whose good offices he owed his preferment to Camerton. Uncle Haggard was born in the days of George I, and his portrait is so lifelike that it must not be omitted. John Skinner thus describes him a few years before his death:

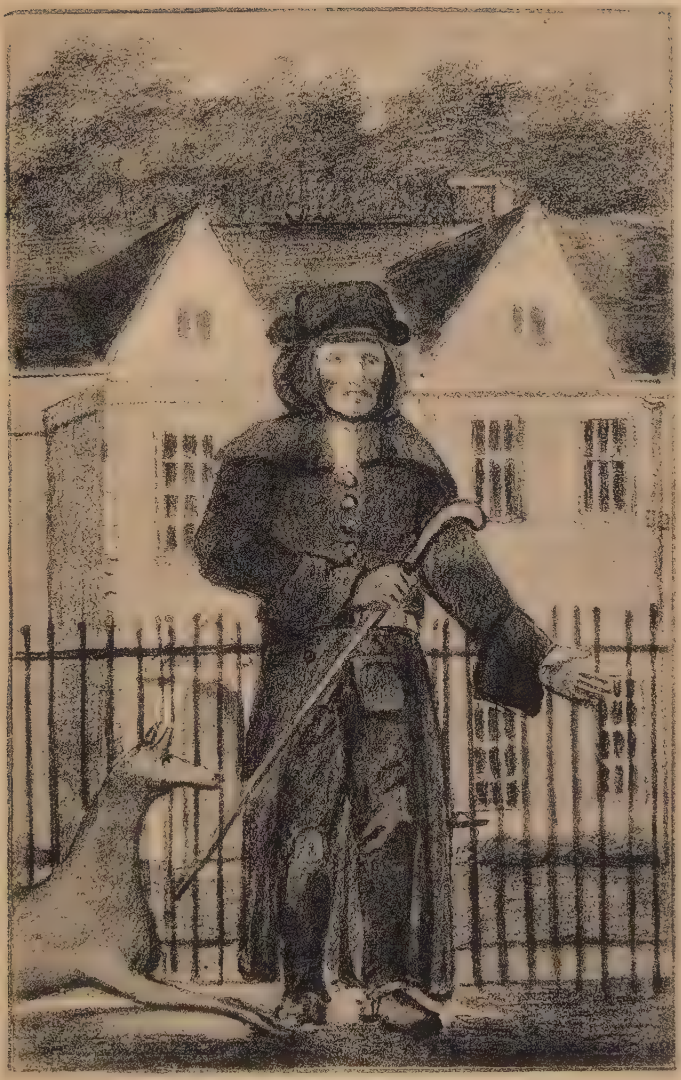
"I found him just going out coursing with his servants, three greyhounds and three spaniels; he wished to turn back, but I preferred accompanying him. We beat the common fields two hours. I happened to find a hare setting, which the dogs killed after a long course, which the old gentleman seemed highly interested in. How surprising it is to see a man between 80 and 90 years of age [really 86] enjoying the strength and spirits to enter into amusements of this kind; he has had the living of Bennington 54 years, and probably in the whole of that time has not missed a season either coursing or shooting. I see no manner of alteration in him, and he is exactly the same as when I used to visit him before I went to Oxford, which is nearly twenty years ago. He wears the same-formed blue greatcoat, the hood covering his wig, a three-cornered hat above, square-toed boots rising above his knee, short spurs scarcely visible, a long stick, and mounted on a little poney. He entered as clearly into conversation as he was accustomed to do, asked me many particulars about poor Fitz, then about my living and the Methodists, saying that they were gaining ground in his country, that Dr. Heath, at Walkern, was so annoyed with them that he threatened to leave the place. The old gentleman remarked that he made no doubt, ere twenty years were over our heads, they would expel us [the regular clergy] from our seats; however, we ought to thank ourselves for it through our inattention and supineness."

The sight of the Rectory, "destitute of its former venerable owner, whose kindness and liberality" he had so often experienced, moved Skinner deeply. "Ever shall I retain," he soliloquises, "the most grateful remembrance of my benefactor, who was in every sense of the word a real good man, and daily, weekly, yearly, whilst thankfully reflecting on the comfortable independence he assured me by purchasing the living of Camerton, return my mental tribute of affection and esteem."

In 1813 he wrote in his Journal: "The mortality in my family has been great indeed, as I have lost my wife and child, two sisters and a brother, two great-uncles, and my father-in-law." Consumption, passed on from one to another, accounts for the deaths of all the younger people.

There is an entry in the Journal made on June 27 of the same year, which shows that Skinner himself had a narrow escape: "I breakfasted this morning with Warren, who pressed me so much to preach I could no longer decline doing so; especially as he had one of my own sermons by him. I find no inconvenience as to the exertion, although in the morning I had a return of the spitting of blood, which for some time past has so constantly attended me." Probably his love of the road and of the open-air saved him, and his readiness to ride or to walk or to go by water in order to see people and places rather than to study speed and ease.

During the early years after his wife's death there is no evidence of any want of feeling on the part of John Skinner for his children, as in the light of the estrange-



The Rev. John Haggard
Rector of Bennington, 1759-1813
Going a-coursing in his eighty-sixth year

ments of later years might be supposed. On the contrary, he seems to have thrown himself into their pursuits. We read of a large kite six feet and a half high, which he made for his boys; of the hermitage, a building in the Rectory garden, perhaps occupying the site of a real hermitage, being decked by his hands and graced with a copy of verses written by him for the occasion, where the children have dinner on Laura's birthday; of a donkey, of cats, and of a dog called "Fido," whom in his solitude, after Laura had gone to school, John Skinner must admit to his meals, "in order to have some animal to talk to, and to prevent what old Mrs. Boodle scolds me for so often, namely, eating too fast." He receives a large piece of bride cake on Captain Scobel's wedding, which he had intended to send to the boys, but his brother antiquary Mr. Cranch ate it up. Their grandmother, however, supplied the loss by sending each boy a cake. On December 31, 1818, he writes to Laura: "The greater part of the day is spent in setting traps for birds or playing with Stone and Abdy; for as to lessons, we have none. They have been very good boys, and I think Owen much improved, especially in his speech [he suffered from a stammer] which will, I trust, be quite established."

Antiquities became more and more the absorbing passion of his life. The Journal is filled with records or drawings of them, and Camerton itself proved to be rich in Roman remains. He began to dig in 1814, and in ten years had formed quite a considerable collection. As his passion for digging grew, that in itself became a source of friction. He disagrees with farmers about the compensation they should receive, and even the kindly Mrs. Jarrett, who had succeeded to her father's estate, is unwilling to give him the necessary permission to prosecute his researches. "They are taking from me the one sweet morsel I have among the many bitter things of Camerton," he complains.

More and more in his loneliness his thoughts are centred in the past, and he dreamed extravagant dreams to give them a suitable setting. "I only wish," he wrote later, "that I had nothing to do with Moderns or they with me! I wish entirely to forget the present scene, and mix altogether in the transactions of past times." As a refuge from the present he began to live in dreamland. As early as December 1812, he filled the vacant space in an old Baptismal Register by recording for his successors his conclusions connected with the antiquities of the place now called Camerton, formerly Camelerton, Camarlarton, and Camalodunum. Before the Roman Conquest the triangle of country between Midford, Radstock, and Radford, with Camerton at its heart, was the dunum or stronghold of the kings of the Belgae, defended after their manner by woods, and morasses formed by the damming back of the streams by which it was surrounded. Here was the royal residence of Cynobelline, king of the Belgae and father of Caractacus, spoken of by Dion, and Camerton was the identical spot occupied by the Roman colonists established by Ostorius at Camalodunum. To him Camerton became an enchanted land, over which the inhabitants in a remote and dim past had cast an heroic glamour. We can see him dreaming in the pages of the Journals.

"It must appear at least singular that the place I happen to inhabit should have been the identical spot where such important transactions have been carried on —that it should have been first the capital of Cynobelline, the king of the Belgae, then the site of the colony established by Ostorius, afterwards the scene of Arthur's contests with the traitor Modred, and contiguous to the retreat of Alfred in his misfortunes."

He conceived also some very wild philological theories, that caused discomfort or merriment to his friends according to their dispositions, in which he attempted to find a secret significance in every letter that entered into the composition of Celtic names.

It would be untrue to picture him as leading an isolated life entirely cut off from the society of congenial people. He paid frequent visits to Sir Richard Colt Hoare, the well-known antiquary, at Stourhead, to Mr. Peter Hoare at Southfield, and to other friends; made archæological tours, attended quarterly clerical meetings, and took some part in the life of his neighbours.

There were squires and clergy in the county with similar tastes, and these formed a little society that saw much of each other. It was nothing to men like John Skinner to be in the saddle by six in the morning, to reach a distant friend in time for a late breakfast, and to spend the next few days riding, walking, exploring, and digging. They would follow for miles on foot or horseback an ancient trackway, or explore the barrows in which the Mendips and Salisbury Plain were then so rich.

There is a charming picture of a meeting of a Society of Antiquaries at Stourhead. Probably Skinner's most notable service to archæology was the leading part he took in the preservation of the chambered tumulus at Stoney Littleton, which is a very fine example of its kind, and which would in all probability have been destroyed but for his efforts.

When Laura, the child of his heart, was twelve years old, in an evil moment he decided to send her to school in the Isle of Wight. His boys accompanied him on the journey when he took her there for the first time. They slept at Lyndhurst on the way. In the evening, when the children were gone to bed, he was charmed by the singing of some wandering musicians before the inn door, which throws another light on his character.

"On listening, I found the songs sung by a female and her daughter were French; one the favourite Provençal Ballad of Henri Quatre; another of the Troubadour; and third, of Portrait Charmant. I told the waiter to give them a shilling to induce them to continue, being in a frame of mind to enjoy music. Afterwards I went to the performers, and on enquiring found they were themselves Provençals, who had been in England only two months. On asking whether they had any of the songs they sang written, they answered in the affirmative, and I purchased three for eight shillings. The words are trifling, but the music most beautiful; at least so it appears to me when sitting by myself in rather a melancholy frame of mind, with the door of my room opening upon the garden, and the air so still . . . not even the rustling of a leaf to be heard."

During these years he did not neglect the work of the parish, and he must be numbered among those clergy, far commoner than is generally supposed, who worked conscientiously and suffered not a little that they might discharge their office truly. Of the services and of the visitation of the sick he was always careful, and for the poor he had a tender heart, and was always ready to champion their cause against the powers that be. He strove with success for an increase in the parish allowances to the aged. He defended the poor man, who had built his little home on the waste, from the rapacity of the landlord. He insisted that the profits of the Coal Company should make their contribution to the rates, and in 1811 took on himself the office of Overseer, because the farmers were unwilling to take up the matter for fear of offending the Squire. He brought to justice a dishonest Overseer in spite of the determined opposition of the Steward of the Camerton Estate. In education he was deeply interested, and made serious efforts at a considerable cost of money and time to acquaint himself with the new developments elsewhere and to equip his own parish with schools. He hoped, when he sent little Laura to school, that later on she might be able to help him in educating the girls of the parish.

But poor little Laura was never to help in educating the girls of Camerton. On March 17, 1820, her father, with a sinking heart, made the following entry in his Journal:

"My eldest daughter, Laura, having met with the same accident her dear mother did nine years before, namely, the rupture of a blood-vessel, I determined on removing her as soon as possible, to put her under Dr.

Garrick's care at Clifton. Accordingly I left home this morning, having borrowed Mrs. Jarrett's carriage, as being easier than a hack chaise, in which my housekeeper accompanied her, and I proceeded on horseback."

On May 1 she was removed from her aunt's house at Clifton to her grandmother's at Bath. On May 13 her father wrote: "I know not how I shall support the last blow; of myself I can do nothing. I have borne up against the malice and injustice of mankind with fortitude, but in this point I am most vulnerable and weak; yet the loss alone is mine, the dear angel will be removed from a bad and troublesome world before she has smarted from its baseness and ingratitude. I had looked forward to the comfort and consolation of her estimable society to smooth the remainder of my days, but I believe my own span is contracting fast, and it is preferable on that account she should be removed before me than to struggle unsupported."

There is much of death from consumption in the Journal, and it is of no use to dwell on these sad pages. The entry on May 23 closes with the sentence: "Laura died at seven o'clock this evening. God's will be done!"

Laura's body was laid in the same grave as that of her mother. She was the child of his heart; she had shared his tastes. When after her death he examined a cabinet he had given her for her collections of coins and shells, he found everything was arranged with the utmost neatness, and she had some years before begun to keep a Journal.

This last blow came near to breaking his spirit, though he struggled gallantly to resist the tendency of his life to shrivel, and from this time the extracts of the Journal tell their own story. Hitherto, the Journal had been little more than a record of his archæological explorations and of his tours; but now that his wife and Laura are both gone, it becomes his confidant. His books are "his friends and consolers"; he finds them "the same to-day, to-morrow, and the next day." In the Journal he records the daily happenings, his reflections on them, and the actors in them. It becomes the mirror of his feelings; in it he makes confession, and as he turns its back pages he judges himself. He recognises "the same querulous complaints" against his associates. "I ought to have exerted more energy and risen above such considerations, so much self love in all we do, there is ample room for humiliation. Indeed, indeed, I do humble myself; the world with all its malevolence cannot make me so low as I actually feel in my own opinion at times." Above all, the Journal was his appeal for justice to a generation to come. People would read it, and they would understand. Of his son's taunts, that which perhaps sunk deepest was this: "Everyone laughs at your folly in thinking the occurrences of your parish and family worth reading." The best years of his life had passed, but he writes now with a fullness he had never contemplated in early days.

The deepest tragedy in his closing years was the discord in his own family. It is impossible and unnecessary to apportion blame, but poor Anna had a difficult task, and our sympathy must go out to her. It is to be hoped that William Robert Augustus Boyle was worthy of her, and that she found happiness in her marriage to him.

On July 1, 1832, John Skinner altered and preached again the sermon he had composed for his own Ordination thirty-five years before. "I don't ever remember," he says, "to have seen so small a congregation when the weather is fair." He had borne many things for his parishioners. He had worked for them, taught faithfully according to his lights, and had been ever ready to give and yet he had failed. Perhaps it had never been in him to love them, and that was the cause.

The story of the last seven years is shrouded in darkness, broken only at the end by the flash of a gun in the wood near his house. His appeal for kindly judgment has lain for nigh one hundred years entombed in the British Museum, and now at last it lies before the public.

ARTHUR N. BAX.

CONTENTS

MEMORANDUM . . . . p. v

PREFACE . . . . pp. vii–viii

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

Ordination—Rector of Camerton—Parish troubles—Tragedy—Death of his wife—The Rev. John Haggard—Consumption—Relations with children—Dreams of an antiquary—Friends and neighbours—Mr. Greatheart—"Poor little Laura"—What the Journal was to him pp. ix–xxii

PAROCHIAL AFFAIRS OF THE PARISH OF CAMERTON

1822

Churchwardens—Their fears—"Jezebel's eye"—Rejoicing at the Coal Works—The ringers drink—Bridecake—The singers drink—A song of reproof—A problem of publication—Alehouses—A Methodist in the sick room—Reflections on Methodists—Bargaining with the miller—A cricket match—Irish famine collection—Roman pavements and their cost—A communion of the sick—Disagrees with Mrs. Jarrett—*Κᾰκοδίμων*—Mrs. Jarrett's secret—Repentant singers—The policy of Methodists—Joseph Goold—Philology—The burning of Goold's wife—Influence of the Poor Law—Sad case of Goold's wife—Callousness of parishioners—Plain words to her father—Expeditions—More expeditions—Why the Methodists separated—Custody of the tower key—No service on Sunday morning!—Despair of helping Methodists—How Methodists might help—General Gore dies—Servant troubles—The iron chest . . pp. 1–41

1823

Discord among doctors—"Accidental death"—Alehouse closing hours—Catholic gentlemen skaite—A bitter frost—A cordial for grief—School bills—Like mother like daughter—A Corpus Christi sermon—His sister's death—A village feast—Downside Catholic chapel—Contumely—Confirmation candidates—A Confirmation—Wanted, a National School—"Hem"—Excursion in a coal barge—An expedition—Coal Company backward—Parish visits—Cyder making—No business on Sundays—Graham's balloon—A Poor House horror—Exculpations—Bill for operating—The paupers' dole—"The Red Post" again—Captain Campbell to Mrs. Gore—James's Powders . . . . pp. 42–73

1824

Antiquaries meet—Lord Arundel of Wardour—Camalodunum—A Roman Missal—Holiday lessons—Sunday school restarted—On a diet—Sunday school reorganised—Fishing—"If you fancy too much"—Depression—How gaol corrupts—The Sunday school wilts—Comparative etymology—His studies a refuge . . . . . . pp. 74–89

1825

A new mode of exercise—The Turnpike Trust again—Biven's wife—Catholic claims—Vaccination—A Catholic convert—The genesis of Downside—Sir John Hippisley—Mr. Barter dies—Education expenses pp. 90–100

1826

An idle vacation—Death of old Mrs. Jarrett—Her funeral—Owen at Oxford—Joseph enters Sandhurst—Fireside troubles . . pp. 101–107

1827

Worried about sons—Scornful looks—"The Devil of Dunkerton"—An ill-behaved bride—Keel the Churchwarden—A claim for old Bess—Can't find a publisher—Boat building—Summoned—The case heard—Wickedness of Camerton—Crowded evening service—Depression—Christmas bells—The Christmas Communion—Insolence—Neglect of Communion—A pert girl . . . . pp. 108–126

1828—First Quarter

A disorderly Baptism—Mrs. Feare falls ill—Irregular Baptisms—Petty persecutions—Worries—Joseph's prospects—Scandal at a school—Closes the school—Anxiety about loan—A poor insane creature—The Rossiters fare sumptuously—Camerton like Sodom—The Etymon of Bumstead—"Mad half your time"—A burglary—Glebe troubles—A new meeting house—A Sick Communion . . . . pp. 127–145

1828—Second Quarter

A churchwarden's duties—Sick of workmen—Finance—Altercation—The sins of a father—A prizefight—Sleeplessness—A surfeit—The parish schools—To Mr. Brougham—Visitations of the Sick—Servant troubles—A Ranters' meeting—Gravediggers fall out—Owen—Notice of Confirmation—Breach with Owen widens—Confirmation Candidates—Owen must go away—Tithe troubles—Consults Bishop's tythe lawyer pp. 146–168

1828—Third Quarter

Domestics—Haymakers' beer—Mr. Brougham in fault—A drunken newsman—Richard Warner's parishes—Tythe—Three hogsheads!—The Bishop's charge—The Visitation dinner—Fussell's scythes—The Church walk—Gloomy anticipations—Proposals for sons' future—Anna—Accounts—The Red Barn murder—Servants' gossip—A wet Sunday—Visits the Bishop—Expedition to Banwell—A stormy night—Canon Bowles—Kindness of the Bishop—His horse thrown down—A public execution—Midsomer Norton church—Reckless destruction—Reflections—A brutified overseer—A missing seal—The falling generation—"Gormandising gluttons"—Contrition tested—Contrition rewarded—Should Owen be ordained?—Mr. Trelawney Collins—A tempting invitation—A sartorial misadventure—"An Indispensable duty"—The Bishop's kindness—The reproduced drawings—Bequest of the Journal pp. 169–211

1829

Owen goes to Cambridge—A carriage accident—Must balance accounts —Retrenchment—" Indefessus Agendo "—Blooding—His children's idleness—Thomas à Kempis—Letter from the Bishop—Camerton for sale —The Justice's curs—The Journal as mentor—Increase our faith pp. 212-225

1830

The Bishop's musical meeting—" Empty reports "—Like King Lear —A visit from the Bishop—Child prostitutes—Rob Roy—Extempore preachers—A leper—The Church Band—Silent bells—Witchcraft—Five colliers killed—Poor Keel—A Camerton wedding—Prayers for the sick—Neglect of religion—Friends altered—" A pack of fancies "—A strike—Visit from his mother—Dilly's funeral—No commission for Joseph—Tolling for the King—" Our nasty newspapers "—Death of Mrs. Jarrett —Thinks differently of her—Her funeral—The profession of an artist—Theft of mourning cloth—The Bishop to breakfast—A bitter quarrel—Influence of Winchester—Sons and daughter—Reconciliation—Sad report of school—Overset by the Bishop—" A sweet nut "—" Many mortifications "—A mob of colliers—Riot Act read—Gloomy prospects pp. 226–267

1831

A strong letter to Purnell—Recommends capital levy—No new licence —Sabbath breaking—Opposes new licence—Joseph's farming—" A few glasses of cider "—The Journal a folly—Blood pressure—" Father, forgive them "—Reconciliation—Mells Rectory . . . pp. 268–280

1832

Joseph's cough—Russell falls ill—Visit to Weston-super-Mare—Improperly lodged—Disapproval of S.P.G.—" How dreadful is this place! "—Anxiety about Joseph—A leading physician speaks—Poor Joseph!—The Political Union—Cholera—The Bishop's allotments—Financial statement—Value of livings—Blind as a tile—Cholera reaches Paulton—Then Camerton—Precautions—Conform to medical direction —Drains and dung-heaps—Causes of infection—To Dr. Norman—A sleepless night—" A base woman "—Sandbags—Welcome!—Repulse—Old quarrels revive—" A Socinian "—Nothing to live for—Here indeed a blank . . . . pp. 281–312

APPENDIX I

Description of a day spent in college during the winter of 1792 pp. 313–320

APPENDIX II

MSS. of the Journal in the British Museum: Journals of Travels and Parochial Matters . . . . pp. 321–323

INDEX . . . . pp. 325–330

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CAMERTON PARSONAGE AS IT WAS WHEN THE JOURNAL WAS WRITTEN . . . . *Frontispiece*

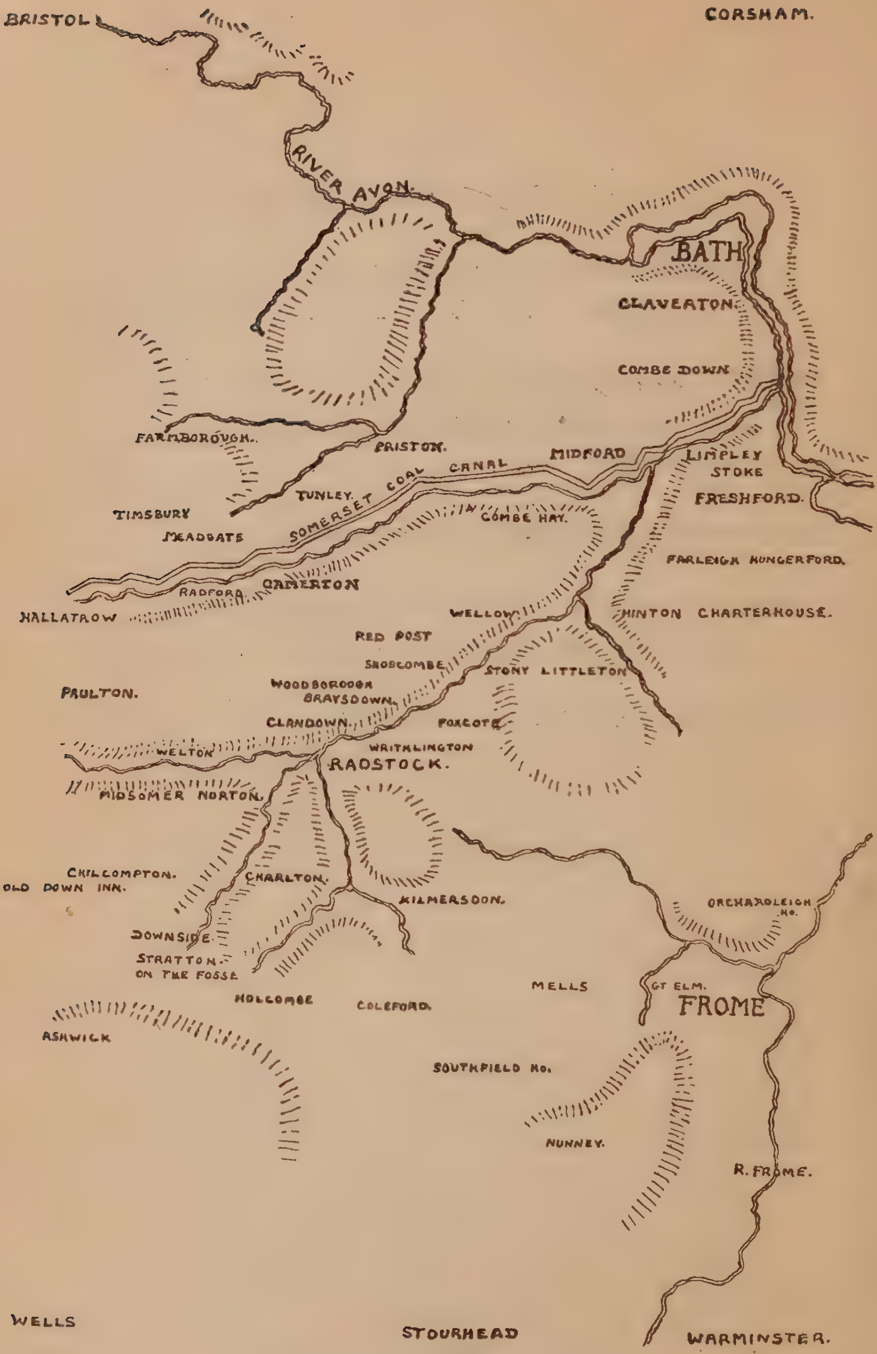
FACING PAGE

THE REV. JOHN HAGGARD, RECTOR OF BENNINGTON, 1759–1813, GOING A-COURSING IN HIS EIGHTY-SIXTH YEAR xvi

MAP: THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF CAMERTON . . 1

CAMERTON CHURCH, WITH THE TOMB OF MRS. SKINNER IN THE FOREGROUND . . . 210

PORTRAIT OF THE REV. JOHN SKINNER . . . 298


BRISTOL
CORSHAM.
RIVER AVON
BATH
CLAVERTON
COMBE DOWN
FARMBOROUGH.
PRISTON.
MIDFORD
LIMPLEY STOKE
FRESHFORD.
TUNLEY.
SOMERSET COAL CANAL
TIMSBURY
MEADGATE
COMBE HAY.
FARLEIGH HUNGERFORD.
RADFORD
CAMERTON
HALLATROW
WELLOW
HINTON CHARTERHOUSE.
RED POST
SHOSCOMBE
STONY LITTLETON
WOODBOROUGH
BRAYSDOWN
PAULTON.
CLANDOWN
FOXCOTE
WRITHLINGTON
WELTON
RADSTOCK.
MIDSOMER NORTON
CHILCOMPTON.
OLD DOWN INN.
CHARLTON.
KILMERSDON.
ORCHARDLEIGH HO.
DOWNSIDE
STRATTON ON THE FOSSE
MELLS
GT ELM.
FROME
HOLCOMBE
COLEFORD.
ASHWICK
SOUTHFIELD HO.
NUNNEY.
R. FROME.
WELLS
STOURHEAD
WARMINSTER.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF CAMERTON.

PARAROCHIAL AFFAIRS OF THE PARISH OF CAMERTON

1822

Sunday, July 7, 1822.

THINKING it probable that Weeks, the Churchwarden, and Hicks, the Overseer, might not attend Church, and consequently not know what measures to pursue respecting the collection, I sent Harris, the Clerk, to them; but it was of no avail.

I preached the sermon I had written for the occasion, and introduced the heart-rending accounts from Ireland[1] to the committee for managing the subscription. The people were very attentive, but rather a thin congregation. Mr. Purnell[2] being present, after Church I mentioned to him my intention of sending the Churchwarden and the Overseer round the parish to collect from house to house.

As John Rossiter, the person I had appointed Churchwarden, did not attend the Visitation, alleging, as I understood, he had never been sworn in, I asked Farmer Keel whether he had any objection to officiate. If he had not he must go to Frome on the 16th to be sworn in. He said he had no objection, but believed that the Churchwardens' accounts were in a very confused state.

After dinner I visited West's wife, who is much weaker, and not able now to leave her bed. The young man at Wick Lane is, I should think, very near his end, as he can only speak in a whisper and his legs are much swollen. Goold's wife much the same. Cottle's daughter I found very little altered in the three weeks I have been absent. Mr. Barter[3] administered the Sacrament to her, as I had requested he would do.

I promised to lend her a book to read, as she said it would be an amusement to her. From hence I walked to Timsbury, and drank tea and chatted with Mr. and Mrs. Barter till ten o'clock. Mrs. Jarrett,[1] I found, was at Camerton for three days lately, and is expected with the newly married pair this week. The budget will then be opened.

---

[1] Famine in Ireland, 1822.

[2] The Squire of Woodborough.

[3] The Rev. William Brudenell Barter, A.M. (Prebendary of Wells, J.P., Rector of Timsbury, 1783–1825).

Monday, July 8.

I called upon John Rossiter with a list I had made out for the Irish contribution, to which I put my name for £5. I then asked him his reason for not attending the Visitation as my Churchwarden on Friday. He replied that the accounts respecting the Bells were in such a state, and the difficulty of collecting the money so great, that he would have nothing to do with it. I answered that he had performed the office of Churchwarden in signing the briefs and other matters, and, having given no notice of his intention to decline it, and the Archdeacon not having notified me to the contrary, I had considered him as such; but, if he wished to give it up, I should substitute Farmer Keel in his place, and send him on the 16th to be sworn in. I further said that he [Rossiter] was to all intents and purposes my Churchwarden, but if he was disposed to consider the duties of his office as unpleasant and purposed discharging them unwillingly, I would, as I before said, nominate Keel. To this he answered that it was Weeks, the Churchwarden, he had to complain of; that he had collected some of the Bells money and never accounted for it; if he collected still greater sums and spent them, they would come upon him [Rossiter]. I said it was his duty to see that the sums collected were rightly secured; that the Parish (when I dismissed the man for his ill-conduct) ought to have been better advised than to put him in an office which would give him the power to defraud them; that they might be sure if he could advise Widcombe, after having embezzled the parish money, to drive off his stock, he could not be an honest man, and they were rightly served for their folly. I further said, it was the conduct of the Parish in these particulars that had made me determine not to attend any Vestry without I was obliged to do so, and I full well saw that they would so much increase their difficulties that ruin must ensue. He said that was certainly the case, but he was afraid to act, for if he opposed such things he should make the people his enemies, and they would injure his character behind his back.

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[1] The Lady of the Manor, widow of Herbert Newton Jarrett, Esq., of Golden Grove, Jamaica, daughter and heiress of the late James Stephens, Esq., of Camerton House, 1783–1830.

I told the man to do his duty, and not to be afraid of what people said of him; that I always acted upon this principle, and no more minded the malevolence and calumny of the people of Camerton than I did the whistling of the wind! "But you have not got your bread to gain by it as I have," was the reply. Yet, I answered, if one is to be deterred from acting uprightly and doing justice through apprehension of displeasing knaves, there is a great chance of displeasing One whose favour we ought to be more anxious to secure.

I clearly see I cannot live longer with this people, I am so continually disgusted with their conduct; and in the situation I am placed I cannot avoid noticing it. At the conclusion of our conversation Rossiter agreed to go round with Hicks [the Overseer] to-morrow to collect the money for the distressed Irish.

I afterwards visited the three invalids. Dawson, the man in Wick Lane, seemed in a dying state, yet he was able to attend to the prayers I read to him. On returning home, and having brought up my Journal, I went to bed a little after ten.

Tuesday, July 9.

The poor man in Wick Lane died in the night. After breakfast I sent my car into Bath for my two boys, Owen and Joseph, who returned to dinner. The interval till their arrival was occupied in settling accounts.

I had to pay the mowers £4, Heal £3, also Goold £3. There are altogether three mows of hay, about thirty tons. The barn floor is laid, but the doors not yet fixed;

I gave orders for completing the work as speedily as possible, since I must put in a tenant by Michaelmas if Mrs. Jarrett does not rent the tythe. If the patroness of this Living could get rid of me altogether, and let her son-in-law, Mr. Gooch, step into my shoes, it would be a good stroke of policy. I am inclined to think this Lady looks with a Jezebel's eye on Naboth's Vineyard; yet, though sons of Belial might be found in abundance, thanks to our well-administered laws it is more difficult to carry into execution acts of treachery and malevolence than under a despotic government. "Je crains mon Dieu et je n'ai point d'autre crainte."

Whilst attending Cottle's daughter this morning her Mother told me that Mr. Gooch, who is to be married this day to Miss Jarrett, was expected at Camerton on Friday, that the Lady herself was not expected for a month or six weeks, and in the plenitude of her gossip she continued to state that Mrs. Jarrett, when here, was very thin and unwell; that she cried over her [Cottle's] daughter as if she had been her own; and further that when she told her that Mr. Skinner had been so good as to call before he left home, she, Mrs. Jarrett, said she had a great regard for Mr. Skinner herself, and would go up to her knees in snow to do him any good. Mrs. Jarrett expressed herself very differently to Clarke, the Schoolmaster, when she turned him from her house, screaming out, as the man described, "like a fiend": "Now there will be no more gossiping with those I hate." This certainly was a little unguarded in this politic Lady! Mrs. Jarrett reminds me of the fable of the ostrich—Sed satis, jam satis.

Wednesday, July 10.

About the middle of the day the bells rang out a merry peal in consequence, I understood, of the intelligence of Miss Jarrett's marriage having been received. In the evening there was a Funeral of an Infant; and I could not help remarking how fully the tolling for the deceased had been absorbed by the more merry news. Harris, the Clerk, not being in attendance [at the funeral], I enquired the reason, and learnt he had been despatched by order of Mrs. Jarrett to carry bride-cake round the neighbourhood.

Bacon called in the evening and paid his last half-year's rent of glebe and tythe; he wished a further reduction of rent which I was not inclined to make.

As there was great shouting at the Coal Works, music playing, singing, etc., etc., which I could hear from the Parsonage field, I imagined at first that the whole populace participated in the glad tidings which set the bells aringing; but Bacon informed me the Proprietors of the Works were present at the Bailiff's, and had distributed money, on account of the discovery of a fresh vein of coal, which promises to be very advantageous. This, I think, is indeed good news for the parish, as it regards the future prospects of so many who depend on the prosperity of the mines.

Thursday, July 11.

Day came in the morning and paid his agistments. There must be something wrong, but I cannot detect it. The whole of the Parks, for which I used to receive from Chichester £20 per annum when he compounded for hay, only nets me now, when fed off, £6 11*s*. 0*d*. Out of this sum I paid Day two guineas for rent of the Church Road. He informed me that the lambs would be ready to be tythed in the evening. I afterwards passed three hours in my study; then visited the sick. The boys, Owen and Joseph, rode into Bath to see their Grandmother. I therefore dined alone. After dinner I walked with my servant, Heal, to Day's farm to tythe the lambs. Sixteen came to my share; but there was a little shabby manœuvring about the last, which was a lamb with its back broke, which Day said fell to my share. However, I must take things as I find them, I cannot yet help myself; but I must take an early opportunity of getting a tenant, as I would not have this interruption to my usual pursuits for twice the value of the Living.

The poor man, Dawson, who died on Tuesday, was buried this evening, and a merry peal succeeded, as in the preceding case. I understand that £2 are ordered to the ringers, as Dilly, the Butler [at the Manor House], asked me how I should recommend its being paid. I said, if possible, one half to be spent in beer, the other to be divided amongst them; but I feared this could not be done. I shall be heartily glad when this scene of drunkenness and uproar is at an end. No work done at the Pits, and the people are more brutified than ever.

Friday, July 12.

Between eleven and twelve last night I was awoke by a jingling of bells announcing the arrival of the Bride and Bridegroom, and before I got up I was destined to be grievously tormented by a more noisy peal, and which continued the whole of the day with little intermission.

In the course of the morning I called upon Cottle's daughter, who continues daily losing strength, but very resigned. As I had administered the Sacrament to her the other day, she expressed how much comfort she had derived from it, and wished, she said, to prevail on her Father and Mother to receive it in Church, but could not.

On going to West's wife I found her much worse, and making heavy complaints of the revelling in the parish, and saying that both her husband and her Father had been so intoxicated during the whole time that it made her quite miserable. She had understood Smallcombe's son—one of the ringers—had so beaten his wife, she was quite a mummy; her husband never comes near her in his sober moments, and her Father has not been upstairs, she says, since she kept her bed.

On my quitting the sick-room, Mrs. White made a formal complaint, and wished me to speak to her husband, which I did; but with very little prospect of benefiting him. The arguments I made use of were grounded on the brevity and uncertainty of human life, and the great impropriety of behaving so riotously when his daughter was dying in the house.

In the evening Mr. and Mrs. Gooch sent some Bridecake, with a note stating they were very sorry they did not send it before, as they thought I was not returned from Town. It was a matter of such insignificance that it was not worth thinking of. Nevertheless, the excuse is rather an awkward one, as they must have known from Dilly's wife, who went expressly from Camerton to attend the wedding, that I was come home. How open are those who are playing a part to detection!

Saturday, July 13.

My boys drove in the car after breakfast to fetch their relatives, the Eyres, whom I had invited to spend the ensuing week at Camerton. I was occupied the whole morning in preparing some of the sketches I had taken in Sussex and Hants, for my son Owen to set, in order to have them bound up.

Just before our dinner I walked to call on Mr. Gooch, and saw him in front of the Manor House. Having paid my compliments, he said Mrs. Gooch did not wish to see anyone just yet. I then apologised for having called so soon, stating I knew it was etiquette not to visit till after their appearance at Church; but, being so near, I did not wish to appear backward in paying my respects. He said, moreover, it was not their intention to come to Church to-morrow.

I am more and more convinced I tread on deceitful ground, and must take heed how I walk! since every step is watched, and every expression noted. The young man I am disposed to think well of; but he himself is not perhaps aware of the power which influences him.

Sunday, July 14.

As soon as the bells began to ring I went to the Church to request we might have no more rejoicing, as we had been surfeited with it the last week. Harris said it was not his intention to ring otherwise than to call the people to Church, unless Mr. Gooch sent to order it.

I replied that it was a general order of mine that there should be no peal-ringing on a Sunday, and that order must be abided by: that I had no idea Mr. Gooch would send any message of the kind; if he did, he [Harris] was to say what I had told him. I read prayers in the morning: very few attended.

The First Lesson, the 12th chapter of the second book of Samuel, contained the beautiful apostrophe of Nathan to David. Are there none of our neighbours coveting the possessions of others? Would there were not! But I must prevent the intrusion of such ideas.

During the evening service the Church was crowded; and the singers, who have been in a state of constant intoxication since yesterday, being offended because I would not suffer them to chaunt the service after the First Lesson, put on their hats and left the Church. This is the most open breach of all religious decorum I have ever witnessed. However, it is too gross even to excite anger: it induces *awe* at the hardened wickedness of these wretches. Though White and West could fill their houses with oaths and execrations when their daughter and wife was dying above stairs, and under the influence of liquor procured in these injurious revels forget their duties as men to their dearest connections, I was not prepared to expect so open a violation of all decency in the house of God.

There could not have been less than twelve or fourteen who quitted the Church at the same instant, thinking I should miss their aid when the Psalm was to be sung before the sermon. But I was fully prepared to go through the whole service, even without the assistance of the girls, whom I ordered to sing the hundredth psalm: O serve the Lord with gladness, and come before His presence with a song. The sermon followed. . . . The subject I selected for my discourse was the imperious call afforded by the death of our neighbours and companions to serious *reflection, repentance,* and *reformation,* which I more particularly alluded to in the recent dissolution of Dawson the poor man in Wick Lane, who was buried on Thursday, and the approaching fate of the two young women now dying of consumption; shewing that neither health nor strength could ensure their exemption from the general summons, which might be given indeed in an instant, without any warning, as was the case in four events still fresh in their recollections, namely, in the instantaneous dissolution of Dando, Mullens, Cromwell, and Bull: the latter only survived a couple of days after his accident.

The people were very attentive, and I found no difficulty in delivering myself with sufficient energy—the greater part of the discourse being extempore—excited by the hardened conduct of the people who had thus openly shewn their disregard to religion. Their only excuse, if any can be offered in such a case, is that they were acting under the influence of liquor, which I verily believe was the case.

After dinner I walked to see the invalids, both now hastening to that bourne from which no traveller returns.

After tea, I spent a couple of hours in my study before I went to bed.

Monday, July 15.

Whilst lying awake this morning, the thoughts of the preceding day and the conduct of the people in Church being uppermost in my mind, it struck me, as *vanity* operated so strongly on these musical mutineers, whether by subjecting their behaviour to the public animadversion I might not, by wounding that vanity, induce them to think more humbly of themselves, and more properly of their situation. A serious lecture I knew would have no effect, I had so often tried it in vain. I accordingly treated the subject in a more playful manner in the following lines:

LINES WRITTEN IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE ABRUPT DEPARTURE OF THE SINGERS FROM CAMERTON CHURCH DURING THE TIME OF DIVINE SERVICE, IN THE EVENING OF SUNDAY, JULY 14, 1822.

Some merry musicians quite fresh from the barrel
Last Sunday resolved with Religion to quarrel,

So, quitting their seats in the midst of the prayers,
Clapp'd their hats on their noddles and hurried down-stairs—
Conceiving by thus turning backs on the Church
Both Parson and People were left in the lurch.
But Parson and People had a more *serious thing*
To attend to than hear these blythe revellers sing;
The subject was Death! for only three days before
To the grave, where vain mortals can revel no more,
A companion was borne, once as healthy and strong
As themselves, who now trip it so joyous along.
Grateful feast to the worms. Alas! silent and mute,
No longer exulting with Viol and Flute,
They too will be laid in dark cells 'neath the sod,
To corruption a prey, whilst their Souls meet their God.
Of these short-lived carousers reflection may ask,
Is it wisdom to barter their souls for a cask?
Since not one single drop of the gallons they drain
Can quench Hell's fierce fire, nor extinguish their pain;
Whilst the oaths they have sworn, and vile songs they have sung,
Will add fuel abundant to flame on their tongue.

After breakfast, having transcribed these lines, with a letter addressed to Combes, the Landlord of the Inn, I called upon Feare, the Bailiff of the Coal Works, to desire that he would transcribe them and have them sent by post or some other conveyance to Combes: as he was at Church during the transaction I thought I had a right to ask his assistance. There could be no possible objection in my writing to Combes myself, but if his guests conceived that their conduct was under the observation of others, whose animadversion they had subjected themselves to, it might have greater weight. My letter to him was as follows:

"SIR,—

"As I can well suppose a great deal of interesting conversation at times takes place under your muchfrequented roof, you will oblige me by making the enclosed copy of verses the subject of your next discussion: its novelty perhaps may ensure it a hearing.

"I am, Sir,
"A sincere well-wisher to yourself and guests,
"PHILANTHROPOS."

Feare, on reading the lines, suggested it might be better to insert them in the *Bath & Cheltenham Gazette,* which was read at the Camerton Inn, to which I consented on condition that my name was concealed, as I have no ambition to contribute to the papers.

Feare descanted largely on the conduct of the Camertonians, saying no parish business could be transacted, and he supposed they should lose the money the Churchwarden had collected for the Bells. I replied it was their own fault for having chosen him as Churchwarden, when I had given such proof of his dishonesty.

I afterwards visited Cottle and West—both still more languid and approaching their end.

Whilst at Cottle's, the son, who used to be an admirer of my late servant's—speaking of the conduct of the singers—said he had understood they had gone from the Church immediately to the Red Post Public House, and had determined to sing in future at the Meeting-House, where the gallery was to be enlarged for their accommodation.

I had heard that Mrs. Jarrett had been applied to by Isaac Green—a staunch Methodist—to contribute to this enlargement, but had not yet done so.

White's wife told me she had been to fetch her husband from the "Red Post" in the evening, and she saw the singers all there, and old Rogers, Father-in-Law of Dawson who was buried on Thursday, so drunk the road seemed not wide enough to hold him, or words to that effect. I mentioned that a Bill had passed Parliament,[1] which would regulate the Ale Houses better than they had been for years back, as they were the principal causes of all the evil we had to complain of. She said in truth they were Devil's Houses, and she could say none had more reason to lament them than she had.

---

[1] Ale Houses Act (3 George IV, c. 78), an Act to amend the laws for licensing Ale Houses, and for more effectually preventing disorders therein.

I received a book from Barratt's to-day, which I think will be of great use to me in my Hebrew studies. It is called *Glossarium-Universale-Hebraicum,* published at Paris, 1697.

Tuesday, July 16.

I was occupied for the most part of the morning in my study tinting the drawings of my last Journals in order to have them bound. I afterwards visited West's wife, and found Isaac Green, the Methodist, with her, which I am sorry for, as I am sure he will not render her latter end more calm or comfortable. I read the prayers, and afterwards took an opportunity during my conversation with her to mention the fallacy of those ideas which led people to say they were certain of going to heaven; that there was no part of Scripture that authorised any such presumption; if it were indeed so, there would be no use in a Day of Judgment! since persons would be beforehand convinced of their acceptance or rejection: we might humbly hope through the merits and mediation of a crucified Redeemer that the promises proclaimed in the Gospel to penitent sinners would be completed; but to say we were sure of acceptance was a most dangerous error. To this Green replied nothing, but I perceived he by no means approved of the doctrine I used. I know he is one of the Calvinistic Methodists, and of course retains very different ideas on the subject. On my leaving the house he followed me downstairs, and said how much obliged he was for my kind attention to the poor woman! I replied there could be no possible obligation, since I only did my duty. I was happy to find her in a proper frame of mind, and only hoped they would not disturb it.

I afterwards sat a quarter of an hour with Cottle's daughter, who told me that her next-door neighbour—Rose—wished to see me, as he was declining very fast.

I accordingly went, and found him in a very low state, exclaiming, after the Methodist manner, how great a sinner he had been, but hoped through the Blessed Saviour he should work out his salvation.

I said the work must depend a great deal on his own exertions; that he must not only repent of what he had done amiss, but make every reparation in his power; if he had injured anybody by word or deed, he should instantly make all the atonement possible. It was a dangerous error to rely solely on the sacrifice of Christ, unless he was disposed to make some sacrifice *himself*.

The man, I find, is a strong Methodist, and his reason for sending to me to attend him I cannot exactly comprehend, though as he mentioned his pecuniary distresses, probably this may have some weight. It was nearly dusk when I got home.

Wednesday, July 17.

This being a rainy morning I was engaged in my study till dinner-time drawing. [The man] Rose expressed himself very thankful for the half-a-crown I had sent him by Owen, and found a little meat [also] very strengthening. From the observation I have made of these Methodists, they have great benevolence in their expressions towards each other, but I do not observe they are ready to part with their money—fully exemplifying by their conduct the lip-serving Christians alluded to by St. James, who are ready enough to say, "Be ye warmed and clothed," but give them not wherewith to warm *or* clothe them. I am sure I am not uncharitable in these surmises, since daily experience convinces me of their truth. As my son, Owen, who has of late accompanied me to these sick houses, seems to feel too acutely, I shall not in future take him with me.

Thursday, July 18.

I was engaged the greater part of the morning in my study, and in the glebe field overlooking the carpenters who have now nearly finished their work at the new house. I afterwards called on Mr. and Mrs. Gooch.

Mr. Barter called before dinner, and asked me to dine with him on Sunday to meet Archdeacon Moysey. Henry Hoare came over from Southfield, and dined and slept at Camerton; his Father he informed me was gone to Stourhead to meet Sir John Ackland.

Cottle's daughter still continues tranquil and composed. White's daughter still getting weaker and weaker. As I returned home I called at the Manor House to request Mrs. Gooch to send some Currant Jelly to her, as what my housekeeper sent was not good, and she wished to take the bad taste from her mouth.

Friday, July 19.

Collins of the Mill looked at the corn I had to dispose of, and declined giving £30 for the ricks of wheat and barley. Last year Parker paid me £40 when there were only forty acres of wheat tythed, instead of fifty. He said that wheat was now 20*s*. a sack, and would be still lower; that lambs were 12*s*. apiece; but I clearly perceived that his object was to depreciate the tythe. This man is a miller, who has been keeping up the price of bread in a very different proportion to what he talks of; thus it seems I can depend on no purchasers in this immediate neighbourhood, and if I can get the wheat and barley threshed out there will be great risque in having a large part of it stolen by the Thresher.

Returning from the glebe, Stephens, the under-gardener to Mrs. Jarrett, came to me in the field facing my house saying he had a favour to ask, which was to let the ringers give a peal, it being the King's Coronation Day,[1] and that the people at Paulton and Midsomer Norton had been ringing the whole morning. I said I was as much attached to the King as any man in the country, yet could not see how His Majesty derived any good from people leaving their work to make a noise with the bells; with respect to the ringers, they certainly did themselves much injury by frequenting the Ale Houses in the manner they had done last week, and then returning home and beating their wives to a jelly. I said, as the Parish seemed so desirous of having them rung (Mr. Gooch had given them a guinea, and Weeks, the Churchwarden, 5*s*. for the purpose) I would not oppose it; but I recommended their not going to the Public House spending the money they had gained in folly, which might be much better spent on their families. They accordingly commenced their ringing, and I walked in the village to avoid the jingling of the Bells.

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[1] First anniversary Coronation of George IV.

The boys, having gone to Radstock in my car, returned in good time, and informed me they had engaged in a Cricket Match with Mr. Boodle[1] and Mr. Flower, and that the servants were admitted in the set, which may be usual in regular matches, but I do not so much approve of my children keeping such company, and therefore I shall be more careful in future not to send them without I can myself be one of the party.

Saturday, July 20.

I began writing a sermon for the ensuing day in order to make one more effort for the distressed Irish, as I find that Rossiter (my Churchwarden) was not successful in his application at the Manor House.

Sunday, July 21.

I was up before six to finish my sermon on the Gospel for the day. After breakfast, my sermon being completed, I walked to Church. Mr. and Mrs. Gooch, the bride and bridegroom, attended, and afterwards subscribed £5 to the Churchwarden's plate. In all he collected £6 11*s*. 5*d*. I gave notice I should preach again in the evening, and make another collection.

The girls sang both morning and evening, and much more to my satisfaction than the great Bulls of Basan in the gallery used to do, who, though never in tune or time, were so highly conceited of their own abilities they thought of nothing else the whole time of the service.

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[1] The Rev. Richard Boodle, Rector of Radstock, 1814–1853.

If they chuse to withdraw themselves, we shall do better without them. The Churchwarden collected 8*s*. 6*d*. in the evening.

Returning from Church I rode to Timsbury, where I dined and spent the evening with Mr. and Mrs. Barter. Dr. Moysey is a pleasant and well-informed man, and seems to have a taste for antiquities. He has engaged to breakfast with me at Camerton next Wednesday, in order to visit the Sepulchre at Stoney Littleton.

Monday, July 22.

The boys drove to Bath in the car and I sent in by them the total of the money collected at Camerton for the relief of the Irish—

THE ACCOUNT

Mr. Purnell	£5	5	0
Mr. Gooch	5	0	0
Myself	5	0	0
Mr. Day		5	5
The Farmers and Colliers .	3	13	2½
	£19	3	7½

which I directed my Banker to remit to Town to be at the disposal of the Committee. On speaking to Heal, who works in my garden, to ascertain the reason why he did not come to Church yesterday, when there was a christening of his child, he had no other excuse to offer than that his sister had come from Bath. I said I should not admit those excuses, I was fearful he was joined with the misguided among my parishioners who always made a point of setting my servants against me; that he would gain little by working their work. He listened without saying anything, but it was with a look of obstinacy rather than feeling. I am convinced nothing can be done with this people.

Tuesday, July 23.

I proceeded with the drawings in my study the greater part of the morning. Captain Scobel called to say he would trace the map of the Dunum for me from the Government Survey, which offer I was happy to accept, as it will be of great service to me by enabling me to mark down with more accuracy the places where Roman and British remains are to be found. He also brought an invitation from Squire Purnell for myself and boys to dine at Woodborough on Friday. After dinner, Harris, the clerk, called for the key of the Church, saying Mrs. Jarrett and her son were arrived, and the people wished to ring. I replied, he must have recollected what I told him on Sunday, that I would not permit the bells to be made mere playthings of; if the ringers did not employ them for the purpose they were intended I should not consent to any extra ringing, and on these grounds should refuse the key.

He accordingly went away very sulkily.

Wednesday, July 24.

As Dr. Moysey had engaged to be with me early in order to visit the Sepulchre at Stoney Littleton, I called at the Manor House and left a message stating the reason I should not wait on Mrs. Jarrett, but said I would do so the following day at twelve.

We were engaged the whole morning at Stoney Littleton and Wellow; and Cottle opened some of the pavement for the inspection of Dr. Moysey.

On leaving the place, I was attacked rather unexpectedly by Coles, the farmer, saying I had not satisfied him for the opening of it, and had been riding over his wheat; that he thought it was not at all like a gentleman to behave in this manner. In reply I said I had already given what I conceived sufficient satisfaction for every damage to the farmer before I began digging; that, as Mr. Gore Langton had given me permission through Sir Richard Hoare, I did not conceive he had any claim on me, as the ground was filled up before his sowing; but he might depend on it, if he talked in the manner he did, he never would have a single sixpence, and if he was insolent, I should call upon Mr. Gore

Langton and explain all these particulars. With respect to having ridden over his wheat, I utterly denied it; that Dr. Moysey, the gentleman who was with me, as well as my own boys, had left their horses to be held by two of the reapers where the corn was not cut, in order to avoid the possibility of doing the least damage; neither could he, if he spoke true, affirm that a farthing's damage had been done.

The man then became more civil, and said he hoped I would consider him as I had done the other farmer.

The weather appearing very threatening, the boys and myself made the best of our way home, where we arrived completely wet about half-past four.

Dr. Moysey returned to Bath by Combe Hay.

Thursday, July 25.

I was engaged in my study for a while before breakfast. Afterwards I visited Cottle, Rose, and White's daughter, and walked from thence to Cridlingcot to administer the Sacrament to Mrs. Lippeatt, she having sent to request I would instead of Sunday. I found her Father and Mother were prepared to receive it with her, also another woman whom I had not before seen, whose name I understood is Kelson. On saying I had not expected to see her, and should only administer it to the Father and Mother of Mrs. Lippeatt, who were so infirm they could not come conveniently to Church, she said she was also so infirm as to be able to go to no place of worship, and hoped I would not refuse her as she had prepared her mind for the purpose. As she seemed so much bent upon it I permitted her, after prefacing it by saying I hoped she had not undertaken so serious a duty in a light manner; that her own heart alone could determine the question.

There was something in the whole proceeding of this woman I thought so remarkable that, after the ceremony was concluded, I touched upon the state of mind which it behoved us to be in, and the scrutiny we should make of our affection towards God. If I could read the heart of this woman through her countenance, I should have said that it was very opposite to her professions. I always feel distrustful when I am sent for by these bigoted people; they undermine the authority of the Church in all possible ways, and cannot be sincere in requiring the assistance of the clergy, unless they absurdly imagine that the sacramental bread and wine is a viaticum to heaven.

Leaving Cridlingcot, I called on Mrs. Jarrett on my way home. Being shewn into the dining parlour, it was some minutes before she made her appearance; but I heard her voice in no very prepossessing tone scolding the servants about some defect in laying down the carpet in the drawing-room. On entering the parlour where I was, she began to say that her object in coming to Camerton at this time was to settle the business between us, and for this purpose she had sent for her lawyer, Mr. Fry, immediately on her arrival, and hoped he would be able to direct her as to what was best to be done; that I was well aware that, as a woman, she understood but little of the business of Tythe, and must depend upon his judgment as to the value: she could not help thinking that £450 was a great sum for the income of the Living, and she hoped I would have no objection to see Mr. Fry to speak on the business, or appoint a person on my part so to do.

In reply I said that when the proposition of renting the Tythe and the glebe land had come from her, my friend, Mr. Peter Hoare, was staying with me, and we had spent some time in making the calculations I had according to her desire forwarded to her, and this calculation was considerably below my present receipts. It remained with her to consider whether it suited her convenience to give that sum or not. She said she could do nothing without consulting Mr. Fry: that the statement I made of my present receipts might be quite correct, and she doubted not they were so, but it behoved Mr. Fry to see my tythe book, in order that he might calculate whether she could with safety to her own interest close with my offer. She then began to state that Mr. Gooch had informed her that if the Bishop licensed him to the curacy, he had a right to demand a sum proportionate to the population; and as Camerton was estimated to contain upwards of one thousand inhabitants, that the salary of the curate would be rated at least at £100 per annum.

If Mrs. Jarrett had been serious in her ideas of renting the Tythe, she might have settled the business with me herself; as she was well aware I should not permit Mr. Fry to have anything to do with my concerns: perhaps Mr. Fry did not inform his employer I had the power of granting a lease for twenty-one years, and that the lease would be binding on my successor for that period? This apparent treaty between Mrs. Jarrett and myself would have done me an incalculable injury had I not been provided for taking up my tythe, as I doubt not, at Michaelmas, owing to the suggestions of Mr. Fry, all the Farmers will send notices for putting out their tythe in kind; since he has doubtless told them what he has told Mrs. Jarrett, that I require £150 too much; as she mentioned she should lose that sum if she took the tythe at my present valuation, namely £450 per annum, and consequently they will be disposed to make the experiment of putting it out. Surely this man is in every sense of the word a κᾰκοδαίμων. I then again reverted to my first declaration, that it would not suit me to take less than the sum I had specified; that the proposition of my letting my glebe and giving up the Parsonage to Mr. Gooch had originated in her; that I never should have thought of leaving my charge if they had not, of late especially, conducted themselves in such a manner as to shew they purposely kicked at all authority; but if I continued amongst them I should exert the powers I possessed, and although an unpleasant contest might ensue, I was prepared to go through with it, and doubted not in the end I should be successful.

In reply she said she conceived there could be no great pleasure in pulling my own nose, to be on a footing with those who made wry faces; that she knew I had been very improperly treated by the ignorant people around me, and that I had felt considerable irritation in consequence; and, moreover, thought if I were to remove from the place awhile it might be better. She then said, if she did take the offer I made, she should expect, if Mr. Gooch gave up the curacy on promotion, that I should leave the appointment of another curate in his stead to herself; that it would be very unpleasant to have anyone who interfered with her son about game, and she should expect I would be bound in honour not to nominate anyone who might be unpleasant to herself. As I perceived a carriage driving up to the door I took my leave, and returned to the Parsonage.

I am afraid, from the whole of my conversation with this extraordinary woman, that there is some important business now on the tapis respecting her own temporal concerns.

Mrs. Jarrett informed me of a family event which was to take place at no very distant period, which she said would tie up her hands and prevent her doing what she should otherwise feel disposed to do if she were left free to act for herself. She enjoined the strictest secrecy as to the circumstance, which of course I shall preserve; but if she tells it to twenty other people she may possibly afterwards accuse me of having betrayed her confidence. It is after all perhaps only a *ruse de guerre*. However, it is clear she does not know exactly what to do, and under these circumstances it is better I should be on my post.

She informed me that she herself was to leave Camerton with her son and daughter at nine the following morning for Cowes, and was uncertain whether she should return immediately or not, as sea-bathing was necessary for her. The plain state of the case is, if Mrs. Jarrett, by making my situation uncomfortable, could drive me from it, get the Living on her own terms and open the way for Mr. Gooch to step into my Parsonage, her policy would succeed; but as I am not to be frightened by the opposition of the lower orders, even headed by herself, and, as I know, by letting the whole I can save myself the trouble of taking up the tythe, I am inclined to continue firm to my first proposition, and leave it to time to work out a change in the people around me.

Saturday, July 27.

After breakfast I drove the boys to Bath to their Grandmother's, whom I have not seen since my return from Town. I took with me two volumes of Journals, fit to be bound up, and the bookbinder has promised to get them done immediately. I then walked to call on Mrs. Gore; found the General better than I had reason to expect, after his severe sufferings since I last was with him. We had some serious conversation, and he prayed most fervently to be released. It was nearly four o'clock before I left Marlborough Buildings, and I was wet through before I got to my Mother's.

Sunday, July 28.

Last evening was so wet, I sent a person to Camerton to say we should not return till this morning.

Before Church two of the singers, White and Harper, both under-bailiffs of the coal works, called to say they were very sorry for their behaviour in leaving the Church in the manner they did, and would never be guilty of such bad conduct in future, and hoped I would permit them to sing again. I replied, on condition of their constant attendance at Church and proper attention to the service there, I would myself look over their past ill behaviour; but there was One of more consequence a thousand million times than myself, whose favour they should be more anxious to regain, and that was God. On every account it behoved them to endeavour by their future conduct to make what reparation they could for the ill they had done and the scandal they had occasioned. They promised faithfully to be more serious and attentive in future, and accordingly took their places again during the evening service.

There was no singing in the morning as the school girls were not at Church, Mrs. Jarrett having dismissed the person who attended them, and it is I find in contemplation to restore Mrs. Clarke to her situation. In the interim the girls are to have a month's holiday.

Can anything more plainly demonstrate the caprice of this Lady? and how little she is calculated to do any permanent good? A little while since the boys' Sunday School was broken up by her unjustifiable interference, and now she gets rid of that under her own immediate patronage, and is about to reinstate the woman she dismissed with every mark of displeasure a few months since. It strikes me that there are some causes for her conduct more reprehensible than mere caprice: she is aware that she has expressed herself in the strongest words of hatred against myself, and it is now her policy to pretend she is on good terms with me in order to cover the treachery of her proceedings; countenancing a party to undermine my authority, and vilify me in the eyes of the people. Surely, surely, this duplicity will not be permitted to continue; the veil will be thrown off, and she herself will be injured by the very instruments by which she intended to injure others. . . . But enough of this unpalatable subject.

Sermon.—I preached in the evening on the text: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you."

It seems to be the interest of the Methodist preachers to inculcate that they do not separate from the Church, and that it is the same thing whether the people go to their Chapel or to the Church. This artful policy has of late been extended to the Bible Societies, where dissenters of all denominations pretend a great regard for the Establishment, and for the well-educated Ministry; but this is only to lull the exertions of the more able amongst the Clergy from being directed against themselves; since it may reasonably be asked, Is it the same thing to attend the crude, undigested effusion of a cobbler or a collier, under the name of prayer, as the beautiful service of our Liturgy? Is it the same thing to have a Minister resident amongst them to visit the sick, advise the ignorant and relieve the afflicted, or to contribute at the Meeting House to a needy adventurer, who himself is greedy of the dole extorted from the hard hands of mechanics?

After dinner I called upon the invalids, and found them on the whole better. West's wife is free from pain, and on that account thinks she shall be permitted to recover. I met Hill, the Methodist, in her room. If ever there was a worthless fellow, this is surely one. How extraordinary it is that these people should gain admittance everywhere!

Monday, July 29.

I was occupied the early part of the morning in discharging Joseph Goold from his situation of taking my tythe, as I found the money I thus put in his pocket was of no service to his poor wife and children, as he spent it all at the Ale House; and with respect to taking care of my interest I was from the first well aware I could trust him no further than I could see him. They had tythed in the course of last week twenty-eight acres of wheat, and I desired them to haul it into the Glebe: fearful to letting it remain in Day's field, after he had removed his own.

About two o'clock I set off in the car with the two boys and drove to Southfield, having engaged to spend two or three days with Mr. Peter Hoare. I walked a little with him before dinner, and had a good deal of conversation respecting my concerns with Mrs. Jarrett, and was glad to find he thinks I have done right to adhere to the original stipulation.

Tuesday, July 30.

I was in the study a couple of hours before breakfast, and twice that period afterwards, in looking over Dr. Shaw's "Travels to the Levant." Some of his remarks respecting Egypt I think hereafter may be of service to me. There is also a curious dissertation on the animals mentioned in Scripture, and on the representations given in the mosaic pavement at Proneste.

At two o'clock I walked with Mr. Hoare to Wanstrow. On our return across Cloford Common I made drawings of the four tumuli, which I imagine to have been thrown up by the Danes after a battle, but shall hereafter perhaps be able to satisfy myself on this head by excavation.

Wednesday, July 31.

On going into the study before breakfast I was for a while occupied with Horne Tooke's "Diversions of Purley." His derivations of English words from the Anglo-Saxon are for the most part correct, but he seems to rest satisfied with the Saxon, without shewing us the source from whence they derived their particles in common with the Greeks and Romans. Had he gone to the originals he would sufficiently have accounted for this identity in all primitive particles. Some of his remarks, however, I found so pertinent, and the information conveyed in the notes more especially, so much connected with the investigation I am engaged in, that I determined on making extracts. Accordingly, after breakfast, I commenced operations, and I continued writing till two o'clock. Mr. Valentine dined and spent the evening at Southfield.

Thursday, August 1.

I was as usual in the study before breakfast, continuing my extracts: the day proving very rainy. Afterwards, when it held up a little, we drove to Camerton without the soaking we anticipated.

I found on my return that Heal and his assistant had secured the tythe wheat in four windmows, so that it has suffered no detriment from the rain.

Friday, August 2.

I sent to enquire how the invalids were, and, hearing no material change had taken place, persevered in my intention of driving to Bath after breakfast, as I had promised to visit General Gore on this day when I last saw him. On my arrival at Upland House, Claverton Hill, I found my Mother was again suffering from the gall-stones, but better than she had been. General Gore was so indifferent he could not see me, but I learnt from Mrs. Gore he was considerably weakened, and dozed away a great part of his time. She herself seemed far from well.

As she was anxious to make enquiries about Sion Hill School, kept by Dr. Allen, for her nephew, John Page, I walked there with Owen, and found everything most satisfactory in appearance, his terms only fifty guineas a year including everything, whereas I am paying upwards of eighty for Joseph at a preparatory School.

Owen and myself got back to dinner. My Mother so much better that she joined with the children in playing a pool at Commerce.

Saturday, August 3.

After an early breakfast I took leave of my son, Joseph, and went in the car to meet the Southampton coach, by which he was to be conveyed to Romsey, and thence in a post chaise to Twyford.

Soon after my arrival home Mrs. Dilly came to say that Joseph Goold's wife was so dreadfully burnt, they did not think she could live; that her husband and daughter having left her by herself locked into the cottage her clothes had caught fire, and if they had not been extinguished by the fortunate intervention of a person on a visit at Mr. Keel's, the house probably had been burnt. Immediately I wrote to Mr. Crang requesting he would come to Camerton without delay, and also to Mrs. Goold's Father, requesting him to see his daughter—perhaps for the last time. I had previously despatched my housekeeper, Mrs. Williams, to do what she could for the poor sufferer. On going there I saw her, and indeed a most shocking spectacle did she exhibit, surrounded by women; her exclamations were, "Why do you not help me, I say? Why do you not help me?" The force of the flame had been most prevalent on the chest, which seemed almost burnt to the bone; her hands also were dreadfully injured, and the poor creature at first felt so much disposed to gnaw them that they were obliged to tie her hands behind her back. Joseph Goold had been sent for from his accustomed haunt, the Ale House, and seemed to me to be in no fit state to give directions. Mr. Crang arrived before tea, and said there were small hopes of her getting over it.

Sunday, August 4.

I heard the first thing this morning that the poor creature had been released about four o'clock. The women who were with her say she repeated her prayers two or three times, and counted the hours as they struck, apparently without much suffering. To herself indeed it is a happy release; but as to her Father and Husband, by whose unpardonable neglect the fatal catastrophe arrived, I cannot say I hope they may not feel. Indeed, I trust they *will*, and that acutely too, for their gross misconduct. This is another instance which forcibly proves the bad influence of our Poor Laws, in checking that ὀργη or natural affection which ought to bind a human creature in a more especial manner to his kindred; or perhaps I should better express myself by saying they offer an excuse to the ill-disposed and self-interested for not performing the duties which are required of them by natural ties, and which they could not dispense with through fear of incurring the hatred and detestation of their fellow creatures, unless this the excuse of the Parish being obliged to provide for its several members in distress were afforded them. A strong case in the present instance might be made out.

The woman conducted herself in every respect, as far as I can judge, with propriety, till her husband's ill conduct induced her occasionally to drink more than she ought to have done, in order to keep up her spirits; but she was far from being an habitual drinker, as it was her endeavour, by keeping a shop, to gain a livelihood for herself and children when her husband was dismissed from his employment. Her Father, a man in easy circumstances, often advanced money for the shop, but Goold's extravagance prevented these aids from being of the service they might have been, and at length he refused paying any more of his debts. Be it as it may be, the daughter was not the offending party: she was dutiful, obedient, and careful of her children, and was not a partaker in her husband's extravagance, the money he expended being usually on his own gratifications. Owing to ill treatment, affliction, penury, and perhaps other causes, the poor woman gradually fell into a low way, and no proper medical aid or other necessary assistances having been administered, at length she lost her reason.

I had applied to her Father in the first instance by letter, afterwards called upon him myself at Frome, and represented the state in which his daughter lay, moreover stating that if she had but proper assistance and proper persons to look after her, she might—possibly—recover; but all I could gain was the promise of a weekly allowance of five shillings.

On a further application for her removal to a proper place of confinement he sent me a rude answer to my letter, saying it was the duty of the Parish to see to this, and that he would only contribute what he said he would in the first instance, namely, five shillings per week.

I then tried what I could do by employing Goold in my tythe field, in order to put some money in his pocket, as he told me his wife was in absolute want of the common articles of clothing. On enquiring I found his wife was not benefited one iota; indeed, sometimes she has been left in absolute want of food, as Goold spent most of the money he procured at the Ale House or in Bath. I dismissed him from my employ.

He then said he should compel Hicks, the Overseer, to send his wife to a proper place of confinement: that, as he could not maintain her, the parish should. Mrs. Jarrett having told me she would pay eighteen-pence weekly, over and above what the Parish might do, should she be sent away, I said I would add another shilling so as to make it half-a-crown, and this with the five shillings which the Parish ought to give and the five shillings the Father agreed to pay, would go towards her maintenance. I moreover promised to make another effort with the Father to complete the farther sum which might be required, and then send her either to Hindon, or to Dr. Fox's at Brislington, who only received fifteen shillings a week when Tyler was sent from Camerton thither. I wrote to her Father, but received no answer, and in this state things were when the accident happened.

It is evident from the foregoing statement that both the Father of the poor woman and her Husband, who were both able to have contributed to her removal to a proper place where attention might have been paid her, *both declined,* under the idea that the Parish would be *compelled* to afford this assistance. The Parish Officers on the contrary were backward in taking the onus upon themselves, knowing the Father was in good circumstances, and it was his duty to see his daughter taken care of; and that the husband was in receipt of 35*s*. per week, and was enabled to contribute out of that income for the purpose.

Thus it happened, between the Parish, the Father, and the Husband, that the poor creature was shamefully neglected while living, and at length came to a shocking end. I received a letter in the course of the day from the Father, stating that he was unable to come over to Camerton himself, but begged I would give directions for a decent funeral, and that he would repay me.

Mr. and Mrs. Gooch attended the evening service, and afterwards called at the Parsonage. I did not touch on Mrs. Jarrett's last note, as I consider the treaty is at an end between us respecting the tythe. It being a beautiful evening, I walked with Anna and Owen to drink tea with Mr. Barter, as he is about to leave home for Devonshire on Wednesday, and I am to officiate during his absence.

I understood during our conversation that young Stephen Jarrett had called upon him the day I had my interview with his Mother, and told him the business was all settled between us: that I was to give up the Living for twenty-one years, and go abroad. It is thus that a fatal injury may be done me by even listening to Mrs. Jarrett's proposition, since the people will think they may at any time drive me from them by a repetition of their ill conduct. I am more and more disgusted with the people around me; such a total want of feeling prevails that there is absolutely nothing to work on. If the miserable death of their companions in the midst of them fails to excite serious reflections; if the contemplation of wretchedness in the extreme, brought on by ill conduct and extravagance; if the prospect of a future state and the apprehension of punishment be of no avail, in vain do we preach—in vain do we visit the sick and the needy, no essential benefit can be performed! They seem to be exactly in the state of the brethren of the rich man described in the parable, who, if they will not attend to Moses and the prophets, will not be persuaded though one rose from the dead!

Monday, August 5.

I was occupied in my room settling weekly accounts, etc., the greatest part of the morning. I then walked to Goold's to enquire what had been done respecting the Coroner, etc. No one, I understood, had been to the house. He asked me, therefore, to advance one pound to pay for the shroud, etc., which I did. On my return I wrote the following letter to the Father, and sent it by young John Goold, who was going to Frome:

CAMERTON PARSONAGE,
August 5, 1822.

"SIR,—

I must request your attention for a few minutes, whilst I repeat in a fuller manner my sentiments on the late event. My situation entitles me to speak plainly and without further preface on the subject.

When it was in your power to assist your daughter, whose sufferings I have so long witnessed, and whose calamity called upon even *strangers* to take an interest in her welfare; when, at the expense of a few pounds, you might have placed her in fit hands, and seen her properly taken care of, *You! her Father, refused to stretch out even a finger to lift your miserable daughter from the dust*; you turned a deaf ear to all the applications I made to you in her behalf; you would not take warning from the appropriate parable I repeated to you of the beneficent treatment shewn to the poor prodigal son by a far more offended parent. And yet this daughter, as far as I have been able to learn, never herself offended you; it was not she who spent your property in riotous living. On the contrary she was dutiful and affectionate to yourself, and kind and attentive to her children. If her husband had offended, if he was not to be trusted with the charge of his wife, the more it behoved you *to take her from his hands*, and put her under proper people. This Goold himself wished to have been done, and urged it equally strongly with myself; but these applications were all disregarded, and through absolute neglect your daughter has perished miserably.

On your death-bed, when the money you have spent your whole life in collecting will appear mere dross, and the coveted possessions of this world will pass away like a vapour which is rolled from the hill, how keenly will it strike and agonise your soul to reflect that, for the sake of a few pieces of useless coin, you have perhaps risqued your own acceptance with God, Who has expressly declared He will render unto everyone according to his deeds.

May these recollections rouse you to make every possible reparation in your power before it is too late. The unfortunate children of your lost—I had almost said of your murdered daughter, demand your immediate care. *They have not offended.* Employ the remainder of the time God permits you to live in giving them the assistance your daughter ought to have received; and above all it behoves you, if you value your own future interest, to be careful that they receive a just portion of your property when you are no more.

I have advanced Joseph Goold one pound towards the funeral; the attendance of Mr. Crang, the apothecary, must also be paid. For these two items I consider you my debtor, as I engaged to satisfy Mr. Crang when I sent for him.

With regard to the funeral, I beg to decline having anything to do with it beyond my own professional duties. In decency some of your family should be on the spot to give directions, and attend the mortal remains of your unfortunate daughter.

I am, Sir,
Your well wisher,
JOHN SKINNER."

After I had despatched my letter I drove Anna and Owen to Priston Rectory, where we dined and spent the evening with Mr.[1] and Mrs. Hammond.

Tuesday, August 6.

Having written my Journal of the preceding day I drove with the children to Stanton Drew, as I had engaged to meet Mr. and Mrs. Hammond there at one o'clock. In our way we called on Mrs. Palmer at Timsbury, in order to ask whether any of her family would accompany us. Mr. Johnson, Miss Palmer, and Mr. Gardner accordingly rode thither.

After having seen the Druidical remains, we ate some of the cold provisions we had brought with us at the small Inn, and returned to Camerton at six, in time for tea, before the funeral of Mrs. Goold, who was obliged to be interred thus early, as it was impossible to retain the corpse longer above ground.

None of her family attended, nor was any reply sent to my letter.

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[1] The Rev. John Hammond, Rector of Priston, near Bath, 1820–1860.

Wednesday, August 7.

Mr. Johnson, Mr. James, and a large party of ladies on horseback called this morning soon after breakfast, in their way to the Sepulchre at Stoney Littleton, whither I accompanied them, and afterwards got Cottle to uncover some of the tessellated pavement at Wellow for their inspection. I gave Farmer Coles a one-pound note, as he laid claim to some remuneration, but without justice on his side, as no possible injury could have been done him. But, as he may influence other people not to let me extend my researches hereafter in their fields, should I feel disposed, either at Twinhoe or Whiteoxmead, I thought it best to do so.

The children and myself dined with Mr. James[1] (at Hillside, Timsbury), and returned home at half-past ten. This is the second time I have been out in the night air this week, and I am fully convinced it is very pernicious to my constitution.

Thursday, August 8.

It being a rainy day I was engaged the greater part of the morning in my study. When it cleared up, we drove to dine with the Boodles at Radstock Rectory, spent the evening and slept there.

Friday, August 9.

Immediately after breakfast we left Radstock, and calling at Camerton to take into the car a freight of provisions for the party who were to meet us at Farleigh Castle, we proceeded along the Wellow Road to Hinton, where Messrs. James, Johnson, Palmer, etc., etc., accompanied by a number of ladies on horseback, joined us, so that the party altogether amounted to sixteen.

After having examined the remains of the Abbey, we proceeded to Farleigh Castle, of which I made several sketches before dinner. This meal we took in the open air, having been supplied with chairs and tables from the farmhouse. Mr. Richardson joined us during the dessert, and attended us to Colonel Holton's Gothic

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[1] Wm. Coxeter James, Esq., J.P., Deputy Lieutenant for the County.

Mansion, with which the ladies seemed to be much interested.

We returned in the evening in time to save our light to *Camerton*.

Saturday, August 10.

The greater part of the morning I was preparing my sermon: the text taken from the first lesson of the service for the succeeding day respecting the Vineyard of Naboth.

Sunday, August 11.

After morning prayers I visited Mrs. Lippeatt at Cridlingcot, and had a long conversation with one of the Brittens—a staunch Methodist, who said the only reason the Methodists separated from the Church was because the regular clergy did not preach the Gospel, and were so lukewarm in their devotions.

I requested him to attend the service of my Church that evening, that he might judge with his own eyes and ears whether I was lukewarm either in reading the prayers or in delivering my discourse to the congregation. This he promised to do. I also requested the attendance of his companion, a Methodist Round Preacher, which he excused himself from doing saying he should be engaged at the Meeting at the time.

I am well aware it is throwing time away to attempt converting people of this persuasion; still, we are bound to essay it.

On my return home I called upon West's wife, who is getting weaker and weaker. She requested some port wine, which I did not refuse as nothing can be done for her benefit by medicine, and it may occasionally relieve her sinking spirits.

I preached my sermon to a crowded congregation—the people very attentive. The Methodist with whom I conversed at Britten's, who I find is his eldest son, was one of the number, and stood up the greatest part of the time I was preaching.

Friday, August 23.

Some of the masons and carpenters working for Mrs. Jarrett requested the key of the Church to ring [the bells], as they said she was expected shortly to arrive home. I declined giving permission, as none of them were Camerton people, and I had made a regulation that only those who rang the bells for Church should be considered as the Parish Ringers.

They then began again on the subject of the key, and told me I had no power to refuse it; that the Churchwarden ought to retain it in his possession, not me, and that he had a right to let them ring. I told them he had no right to let them ring without my consent, and I certainly should not grant it on the present occasion. They then became very insolent, and I left them.

About an hour after, hearing one of the bells strike out, I went to the Church, supposing they had procured Mrs. Jarrett's key from one of her servants, but, all the doors being shut, I called out to the man in the belfry and desired him to come down and give me admission, which he declining to do, I put my foot to the door and forced it open. I found three men there, whom I desired instantly to leave the Church, which at first they seemed disposed to resist, but finally they went down the belfry stairs, and walked into the churchyard, which they absolutely refused to quit, saying they had as much right there as myself. Dilly, Mrs. Jarrett's servant, then came, and told them his mistress desired them immediately to leave the premises. The men then said they would do as Mrs. Jarrett wished, but not for me. They then went away.

Sunday, August 25.

Mr. Gooch sent before Church to say he was ready to assist me in the duty if I wished it. I accordingly called on him, and found young Jarrett also arrived. It was settled that Mr. Gooch should preach in the evening at Camerton. I read Prayers and preached at Timsbury. On coming out of Church, Mrs. Parish said, " So there is another wedding about to take place at Camerton; young Mr. Jarrett is going to be married as well as his sister.'' I pretended ignorance, as Mrs. Jarrett had mentioned the circumstance to me a few weeks since as a great secret. On returning home I called at the Manor House, and mentioned what I had heard to Mrs. Jarrett, fearing lest she should think I had divulged the secret she had intrusted me with. She then said it was no longer a secret, as the lady—Miss Wathen—was then at Camerton; it was impossible that the two young people should be driving about together without its being known.

Sunday, September 1.

As I had engaged to perform the morning service for Mr. Cookson at Foxcote, he being ill, I went there accordingly, fully expecting that Mr. Hammond, of Priston, would take the duty at Camerton; but to my great surprise and, I may add, chagrin, I found on my return that no morning service had been performed, and that a large congregation, after waiting upwards of half-an-hour for the Clergyman, had gone home. Whatever was the cause of the mistake, I shall not be inclined to volunteer for other Churches, where there is a chance of my own being neglected.

Monday, September 2.

Having engaged to accompany Mr. Boodle to the Clerical Meeting at Mells, and call upon Mr. Knatchbull and Mr. Hoare, I took my breakfast with him at Radstock. We got to Mells before two o'clock, and met only five other Clergymen, namely, Richardson, Algar, Ireland, Bythesea, and Glossop: some discussion but no information, respecting the Marriage Act[1] took place. It seems rather paradoxical that a composition the lawyers cannot comprehend themselves should be sent into the country for the instruction of our boobies, who will be as wise after hearing it three hundred times, instead of three, as they now are, and that is saying quite enough. I returned with Boodle to Radstock Rectory to drink tea and sleep. . . .

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[1] Marriage Act (3 George IV, c. 75), July 22, 1822. An Act for the better preventing of Clandestine Marriages; ordered to be publicly read in all Churches on some Sunday in October, November, and December, 1822.

Tuesday, September 3.

After breakfast I returned home, as my Mother, with my sister Laura (Mrs. Manningham), and my brother Russell, had promised to spend the day at Camerton. Not finding them on my arrival, I walked to Cridlingcot to call on Mrs. Britten.

I always make a point of visiting the sick when I am sent for, but have never found I have been of the slightest service to the Methodists excepting through what I may chuse to give. Old Mrs. Britten and all her family are rigid Methodists, and why they in the first instance sent for me to attend them I cannot conceive. The poor woman is very near her end; she has had some port wine and pecuniary assistance, as well as received the Sacrament at my hands, but as to my conversation being of any service, I fear it has been rendered otherwise by the misrepresentations of those around her.

Wednesday, September 4.

At three o'clock I called on Boodle at Radstock, and accompanied him and his lady to Mr. Knatchbull's; we found there Mr. Dickenson, the County Member, his wife and son; Mr. Allen, of Bath Hampton; Mrs. Grey and her daughter, of Stratton; and the Miss Parrys.

Mr. Knatchbull said there was a bed still at my service, which I did not accept, as I thought I might be of use in attending the Boodles—there being several gates to open, and they had no servant with them.

Thursday, September 5.

I called on the invalids immediately after breakfast, and found Cottle's daughter very much worse. Adam Nash's wife was with her, a thoroughbred Methodist. How strange it is these people will interfere, and thwart and pervert all the efforts of the regular clergy. Indeed, our advice is held of little value. Adam Nash, the collier, himself pretends to know far more than I know, and his wife is sent to enquire after assurances, and perplex and harass a mind, as far as I am able to judge, properly prepared to exchange this state for a better. I have often thought that some of the more steady and serious among the Methodists might be of great service to the regular clergy, if they would keep within certain bounds and not be hurried away by feeling and fancy. As they know far better the private life and disposition of the poorer orders, they might give some very useful information to the clergyman when he went to visit the sick. In the Primitive Church there were evidently persons of this description under the name of Catechumens, who were of great assistance to the parochial minister. But alas! the present Methodists set up their opinions in opposition to those of the clergyman, they in fact endeavour to convert him; and look upon him as little better than a castaway if he cannot feel as they feel. On his explaining the terms of the Gospel Covenant, and the necessity of good works as well as faith towards effecting salvation, he is told by some old woman by the bedside that "Christ is all in all"! A clergyman nowadays has indeed a difficult task to perform.

Friday, September 6.

I was occupied the beginning of the day at the Glebe House, looking over the carpenter's work and settling his account. I find it will cost me £50 more than I estimated, that is, £200 instead of £150; and indeed it is a very comfortable residence for a farmer with a small family. Mrs. Jarrett and her family can have no reason to complain of my incumbency in this respect, however they may disapprove of my conduct in others, since I have expended in the course of twenty-two years no less than £1,200 on the premises, and moreover recovered the almost obsolete claim to Woodborough, after a contest of thirteen years in which I expended £500, which would have been entirely sunk had I not been successful in bringing Mr. Purnell to a compromise.

Thursday, September 12.

I wrote letters to my two boys at Winchester and Twyford, and then went into the village.

Cottle's daughter died last night, quite calm and composed. May every example of mortality and summons from this sphere remind *us*!

Friday, September 13.

I was engaged the greater part of the morning in overlooking the men employed in walling up the well in the glebe field, and in my study looking over some papers respecting the analysis of ancient names, which I purpose arranging.

Frapnell, the tiler and plasterer, asked eight shillings for making some little repairs in the Chancel, which I got another man to do for two and sixpence. One cannot turn on any side without imposition, and it is melancholy to think the evil is likely to increase, as we have no school to inculcate honest principles, and the School of the Coal Pits is decidedly against everything which is in the least connected with them. If this parish were the epitome of the country in general, our hour of dissolution I should fear were near at hand.

I reminded Gullick of the ten pounds still owing to me, and which he had flattered himself I had forgotten, notwithstanding he promised in writing to pay it three months ago.

Sunday, September 15.

I preached this morning on the Resurrection, in allusion to the funeral of Cottle's daughter which took place after the service was concluded. A considerable number of people attended the remains. Old Cottle and his family had a post chaise. Surely they would have judged more properly to have made less of an exhibition, as it calls forth the animadversion of their equals, and stirs up envy.

Thursday, September 19.

I received a note before breakfast from Bath, stating that General Gore had breathed his last. As a chaise was sent for me by the bearer of the note, immediately after breakfast I left Camerton for Marlborough Buildings. On arriving, I found Mrs. Gore more tranquil than I expected.

Sunday, September 29.

I performed duty in the morning at Camerton, and administered the Sacrament. I afterwards called on White's daughter, who seems very little altered in face during the last week. She is quite resigned; and begged I would not permit the singers to sing at her funeral, as she knew they would all go to the public house immediately afterwards.

After evening service and tea, I called on Osborne and Stephens, wishing to know from them if possible what were Joseph Goold's intentions respecting his boys, whether he would consent to their being placed out as apprentices, if the grandfather could be brought to take that charge upon him. They said they did not think that Goold would part with them, as they brought in fifteen shillings per week.

I knew this pretty well before, but also knew if I spoke to Goold myself I should hear some deception.

I continued in my study till a late hour.

Tuesday, October 1.

To-day I had occasion to remark some of the same evil doings amongst my servants I have before seen, and I expressed myself in terms they could not possibly misunderstand. Mrs. Williams, my housekeeper, professed entire ignorance, but I saw by her manner she was not so innocent as she pretended to be; but enough on this head!

After breakfast I drove to dine in 10, Marlborough Buildings, Bath, expecting to meet my Mother there, but in this I was disappointed, as the engagement with Mrs. Gore had been set aside.

I read prayers to Mrs. Gore and her family; also one of Blair's sermons on the "Consolations of Religion in Adversity and Affliction."

Mrs. Gore having made me a present of Jeremy

Taylor's works—fifteen volumes—they were put up with my portmanteau and conveyed to my Mother's, where I dined at three o'clock, and returned to Camerton in sufficient time to save my light.

I found notices, on my return, from Hicks and Weeks, that they should set out their tythe in kind.

The evening was employed in writing till bed-time.

Monday, October 7.

Having deposited as many of my manuscripts as it would hold in the Iron Chest, in case of fire during my absence, and giving strict instructions to the servants to be careful of their candles on going to bed, I left home and drove to Bath in preparation for commencing our journey to Town.

1823

Wednesday, January 1, 1823.

Skaited the whole morning, but at great risque of our limbs! the colliers having thrown stones over the ice.

Thursday, January 2.

Walked after breakfast with the boys shooting. Owen picked up in eighteen-acre field, near the Roman habitation, a small oval Cornelian stone of a brooch, with a figure rudely cut upon it.

Friday, January 3.

The frost having broken up, I was occupied in my study. In the evening one of the colliers, A. Garratt, came to say his brother had broken his back in the coal works. I immediately went to his house in Wick Lane, and found him lying in a most deplorable state, the spine having been put out below the shoulder by a mass of coal falling upon him. This is the third instance within these last two years of the same accidents having occurred. I found three or four of the Methodists assembled round the bed exhorting the poor creature to repentance, as they informed him his time was but short, and he must make the best use of it. What with his bodily pains and his mental fears, the sufferings of the man were almost beyond bearing. I staid with him above an hour, and stopped the ill-judged interference of these fanatics by saying I would employ some proper prayers for the occasion, in which we might all join for the benefit of the poor sufferer: that in the state he was himself in, it was impossible for him to collect his ideas to offer up any particular prayers for himself, and by worrying his mind under present circumstances they only increased his sufferings. I then read to him, and succeeded in getting Isaac Green, the principal of the Methodists, to leave the house at the same time I did, otherwise the poor man would have been worked up to delirium.

Saturday, January 4.

I went to Wick Lane immediately after breakfast. The poor fellow was grown tranquil, but suffered from not having his water drawn off, the bladder being paralysed, as well as the lower extremities.

As the man seemed desirous of having Mr. Flower's advice, as well as that of Mr. Curtis who attended him as Doctor of the Club, I sent for him by my servant, and, on seeing him after his visit, found he was of opinion that an operation might be performed with every prospect of success, that is, by removing the injured bone and relieving the pressure. I was almost inclined to persuade the poor fellow to submit, but was fearful of influencing him. I paid Mr. Flower a one-pound note, as he had expressly come over on the receipt of my note.

Sunday, January 5.

I walked before Church to call on the sufferer in Wick Lane. Garratt had passed a more tranquil night, but had suffered from not having his water drawn off, nothing having passed since three o'clock on Friday afternoon, when the accident happened. Mr. Curtis had been sent for, and had relieved him by drawing off the water, and would perform the operation on the morrow.

Monday, January 6.

I walked after breakfast to see the sick man, and learning that Mr. Curtis was then at John Rossiter's I went there to ask whether he actually meant to have the operation performed, and when? He replied, whenever he thought proper; that I had no business to interfere, no more than any other person; the man was under his charge, and I had no business to send for another.

I said, that as I understood from Mr. Flower on Saturday, that every day's delay added to the risque of success in the performance of the operation, I should candidly tell him I would take minutes of everything that had occurred, and draw up the case, should the man receive any detriment from the delay. Mr. Curtis then said he did not care what I did, as he conceived I had no right to injure him in his business by sending for Mr. Flower.

I called in the course of the day on Mrs. Jarrett at the Manor, hoping her interference might be of service in quelling the discord among the doctors, since Curtis declared he would walk out of the house the instant Mr. Flower entered. I found it was agreed to send for Mr. Pope to meet Mr. Flower the next day to perform the operation, which was certainly the best method to accommodate the feud, as Mr. Crang, I find, is no less at enmity with Mr. Flower than Curtis. These doctors differ among themselves, but it is hard that their patients should suffer for their disputes.

Tuesday, January 7.

I waited at home in expectation of hearing the operation was performed; but it did not take place till the evening, when Mr. Flower with his partner, Mr. Leech, opened the back near the spine, and extracted a part of the protruding bone. The man bore the operation with great firmness, but did not experience the relief I expected.

Wednesday, January 8.

I walked after breakfast to the poor sufferer at Wick Lane, and found him quite quiet after the operation, and anxious for me to read prayers. I then went to the Red Post, where I attended the Coroner's inquest on Farmer Lippeatt, who lost his life the Saturday preceding. It seems he had been drinking till twelve o'clock in the Red Post Public House, and was so intoxicated he fell down on the floor before the landlord turned him out of the house at that hour, shutting the door in his face, and exclaiming, "Damn your eyes, you shan't stay here all night," although the man begged to have a bed some time before, which the landlord refused because he had no money, and turned him out to take his chance. The poor man walked through a gap near the public road, thinking it was an opening to go into the field in his way to Dunkerton, and fell upwards of twenty feet into a quarry, where he lay till Sunday morning, when he was taken to the Red Post, and died not long after, his breast and back being broken. The jury, attended by Jacob Balne, the constable, brought in their verdict, Accidental Death. After the verdict was returned, I asked whether I might not say something to Lloyd, the landlord. Mr. Layng, the coroner, having assented, I then said although it could not be affirmed that he was immediately instrumental to the death of the poor man, yet he could not, I supposed, feel himself comfortable under the idea of having been partly so, for if he had only attended to the regulations of the magistrates he would have drawn no beer after ten o'clock; he had permitted the man to lose his reason by intoxication, and then closed his door upon him, leaving him to destruction. I further said that this Lippeatt was not a stranger, but a farmer residing in the neighbourhood, therefore there could have been no risque in offering him a bed, as he was certain of meeting with him again. I then said it behoved him to shut his door at ten o'clock, according to his instructions, and that I should see this was done. He said he had no instructions. I then turned to Balne, the constable, and asked whether the magistrates' clerk did not supply them. On his answering in the affirmative, I desired him to procure a paper, and set it up in the public house.

Friday, January 10.

I drove to Bath to my Mother's in the car, or rather young Boodle drove me, and broke one of the springs—the roads being so hard with the frost. As Dr. Holland had engaged the boys with my brother, Russell, to go to the play, I accompanied them with young Boodle and my daughter, Anna. We returned in a close carriage to my Mother's. The play was, "Mrs. Cowley's Bold Stroke for a Husband"; the entertainment, the fairy tale of "Cherry and Fair Star," the scenery and dresses better than I expected.

Saturday, January 11.

Dr. Holland with his son accompanied us to Camerton to a five o'clock dinner, and we passed the evening in looking over Shakespere's Prints, by Boydell.

Sunday, January 12.

I read prayers in the morning; in the evening Dr. Holland performed the service, and preached a good plain sermon on the text, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"—a good subject for the commencement of the New Year. Mrs. Jarrett was present, and the people attentive; but the school children behaved themselves but very indifferently.

Tuesday, January 14.

As it had frozen hard during the night, and the boys wished me to accompany them to skaite, I walked with them to the Dundas Aqueduct in Claverton valley, and skaited for four hours on a fine piece of ice where the Combe Hay canal had not been broken. Some of the Catholic gentlemen from Downside passed us, and said they had come on the canal the whole way from Camerton.

Sunday, January 19.

I called on Garratt after the morning service, when I preached on the text, "In the latter times shall come those who have itching ears, and will not endure sound doctrine." I was induced to give this sermon because I have perceived the Methodists more alert than usual, having made a new gallery to the Meeting House on Red Hill, and abstaining more from the communion of the Church than they were wont to do. The singers also have ceased their attendance, and none of the farmers now are in their places at Church. Mrs. Jarrett for the sake of popularity has held out expectations to the Methodists of contributing to their new gallery; whether she actually did so or not I have yet to learn. She is a foolish woman: Varium et mutabile, says Virgil of old. I would forgive her folly if I thought she acted on principle, which I am convinced she does not, unless it be to acquire authority by any means however degrading.

Two leading springs the female hearts obey,
The love of pleasure and the love of sway.

Friday, January 24.

The frost so intense last night I could scarcely keep myself alive; the water froze in the pot de chambre, although there was a good fire in my bedroom, and the jug in my wash-hand bason froze solid. I never experienced anything equal to this, excepting in the hard frost of 1788 when I was in Holland.

Sunday, January 26.

The snow which had fallen in the night was so deep, I agreed to have only one Church, and that was in the evening. The boys amused themselves as well as they could.

Thursday, January 30.

I have not read less than ten hours a day on an average for this week past, and have got through a good deal. Again very bad accounts of dear Laura.

Friday, January 31.

The boys went in to my Mother's. I wished much to have accompanied them, being anxious to learn how my sister is, but could not, there being three persons dead in the Parish.

Tuesday, February 4.

I was up early to take leave of the boys, who went in the car to the Cross Keys to meet the Salisbury coach.

Wednesday, March 12.

After tea I thought I would ask John Rossiter's wife how she was, not having seen her for several days. On my way to the house I learnt she was dead; I was much shocked at this sudden departure, and, hastening my steps, found Mrs. Jarrett and a number of women round the bed on which the corpse was laid. Thinking I intruded just at that time, I was returning home, but as the poor husband seemed in a most deplorable state I went back again to him, and in my way met Mrs. Jarrett crossing from the house, who told me she was with the woman just as she died. Entering Rossiter's house, I found him devoting himself to feelings of despair, and unable to listen to reason. Thinking that a cordial might be given with benefit under the circumstances, I returned home for a bottle of port wine, of which I persuaded him to take two glasses, also the women who were in the house. Having continued with this afflicted family upwards of two hours, and succeeded in tranquilising the first transports of their grief, I left them a little after eight o'clock, and continued in my study till prayer time, as my mind was quite worn down.

Thursday, March 13.

I drove to my Mother's, and was much concerned to find my sister looking so much worse than I had seen her, indeed her cough is now so frequent, and her expectoration so copious, I cannot flatter myself that she can get over it; but at present she does not seem herself aware of her danger. I promised to take my tea with her, which I did; but was very uncomfortable in seeing her so much oppressed in breathing, the room being too close, her fever also very strong.

Saturday, March 15.

A person brought me a note from Miss Sennett, with Anna's account for the last half year, amounting to £54. I am sure, if we are obliged to abate one-third of our incomes, that education ought to be lower in proportion, but instead of that it is increased. What I have to pay for my three children's education this half year is as follows:

Owen	£62
Anna	£54
Joseph	£42
	£158,

besides clothes, pocket money, journeys, etc., etc., so I can hardly estimate the education of three children, the eldest only fifteen, at less than £400 per annum. I wrote to Anna saying she might mention to Miss Sennett that the account should be settled after I had gotten my tythe, but that I could not do so just now, having overdrawn my Banker on her brother's account. My Mother informed me that our cousin, John Page, was lately dead. This is the third lad my uncle has lost: one was killed at the Battle of Waterloo.

Sunday, March 16.

Very few people at Church. Not seeing Mrs. Jarrett and her daughter there, I called at the Manor House to enquire respecting them, and was shewn into the drawing-room, where I saw Mr. and Mrs. Gooch writing letters: the former apologised for not having attended to the duty of the day. I told him no apology was necessary to me, since his own conscience must tell him what was best to be done in such matters.

On calling on John Rossiter I found him much more tranquil. He asked whether the corpse might be carried through my plantation road to the Church, which of course I consented to, only stipulating that my servant should open the gate for them, to shew that the road was not public.

I preached on the subject of Preparation for Death: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away." Several at Church, among whom was Mr. Purnell.

As soon as the service was concluded I called at the Manor House to enquire after Mrs. Gooch, who had quitted the Church at the beginning of the Litany, and, as her husband followed her, I was apprehensive of her being ill, but learnt there was nothing of consequence the matter. Surely the Church is too solemn a place to trifle with, as with a drawing-room, and a clergyman above all ought to have some paramount reason for quitting it. The funeral was at four; the Church crowded, even to inconvenience; several people were there I very seldom see in attendance for their own advantage. I could not help thinking of the absurdity of following a lifeless piece of clay to the Church, when they neglected to bring their own animated bodies thither. But I am weary of moralising on this untoward people; it is a hopeless case, and things must take their course.

Tuesday, March 16.

I got into my car a little before three o'clock and drove to my Mother's, being anxious to be on the spot during the precarious state of my sister's health. On my arrival I found it was as I expected, she was much weaker and the fever very high.

Saturday, April 5.

Having much to settle at home, I returned thither after breakfast. Harris, the clerk, gave me part of a fibula found in his garden; and another man, a short time since, three coins of the Lower Empire found in Mrs. Jarrett's garden. Garratt is better, but no chance of recovering the use of his limbs.

Thursday, May 15.

Jacob Balne married the woman he has lived with so long by my persuasion this morning. I took the opportunity of speaking seriously to him. If I could influence this fellow to do what his own mind and conscience should induce him to do, he might be of use in preserving the order of the Parish.

Saturday, May 17.

I heard this evening some sad accounts of the Somer family, and intend to speak to the Overseer respecting them. The mother presented the Parish with four illegitimate children, the two elder daughters have each had one and the third is in a fair way to increase the number, and yet we are now maintaining the whole family at the Poor House, when the husband of the woman, Somer, is living with another person at Timsbury, to whom report says he has been married.

Monday, May 26.

I received a letter from my Mother saying Laura was so much weaker, I determined going in to Bath the following day.

Thursday, May 29.

Having understood that the new Catholic Bishop, Mr. Baines, was to preach on the festival of the day (Corpus Christi), and being anxious to hear what he could advance on the subject of the Real Presence, I accompanied Mr. Haggard and my brother, Russell, to the chapel after breakfast. I shall not attempt a description of the ceremonies employed while celebrating High Mass; sufficient is it to say that no acting during the time the chapel was a theatre could exceed what we then witnessed; yet I must also observe that to the generality of spectators the genuflections and gestures of the priests and their attendants, and the solemnity of the music must be very impressive, when the eyes and ears are lured into the service. Reason is content to be passive; indeed, how few of mankind are in a situation to employ their reason in these matters.

With regard to the subject of Mr. Baines's discourse, delivered, I must do him the credit to say, in a very impressive manner, of course I suppose it was memoriter, not extempore, the delusive turn respecting corporeal and spiritual by no means benefited his argument with men of reading and reflection. Had his auditors been permitted to read on their return home the able charge of the Bishop of Durham in 1809, they would not fail to see the subject in a very different light than they do now. I am speaking of the Protestant part of his hearers, who appeared to be very numerous. The admission to the chapel was two shillings apiece for those of a different community. Mr. Day, the farmer at Camerton, who has been so intolerant with me, although claiming almost unlimited toleration, was in the gallery close behind me. As there is, I believe, a law still extant, and a considerable fine for the clergy who are found in Catholic assemblies, I hope he will not hit upon a Catholic mode of retaliation.

Were I inclined to reply to Mr. Baines's arguments, which I am in no respect disposed to do, since they have been answered over and over again, he might treat me as a heretic without mercy.

I spent the evening with my sister, who seemed much more comfortable in herself, the oppression on her chest being removed.

Thursday, June 5.

While getting up this morning a little before seven, Treherne, my Mother's man, came into my room and said that dear Laura was no more. It seems that her servant, Gibson, who slept in her room, had heard her cough a little about three o'clock, and call out, "Joseph, Joseph," as though dreaming of my youngest boy. A little after six o'clock, on going to her mistress's bedside, she found her with her eyes unclosed and quite dead. It must have been quite easy; indeed I felt most thankful I was spared the pain of witnessing the concluding scene; the anticipation of evil is always more dreadful than the reality, at least I have always found it so.

Friday, June 6.

I rose early and walked in the garden before breakfast. Mr. Haggard called in order to examine the papers, to see whether any particular directions were given respecting the funeral. By the Will, directed to me as executor, it appears that the interest of the property standing in dear Laura's name in the Funds is to be employed by my Mother during her life, afterwards the principal to be divided among my three children on their coming of age. I am rather sorry for this, as a little independence is a dangerous thing for young people, especially if they are inclined to be expensive on their first outset in life. However, I am gratified by this mark of regard, which, indeed, began early, and ended only with her life.

Friday, July 4.

This being the coming-of-age birthday of Mrs. Jarrett's eldest son (John Jarrett, Esq.), it was ushered in by the ringing of bells as soon as it was light, great preparations having been made for this important event by the killing of an ox and the purchase of ten hogsheads of cyder, besides strong beer, spirits, etc., etc., with seven sacks of potatoes and a waggon load of bread. All the farmers, colliers, etc., etc., and their friends from the surrounding neighbourhood did their best in the course of the evening to get rid of this good cheer; dancing, music, songs, and, I should suppose, plenty of swearing concluded the feast. As I had no great goût for entertainments of this sort, I accepted Scobel's invitation to dine with him at Farrington. Before tea we played a match of bowles on the lawn before the house, and I afterwards drove home under a heavy dew.

Sunday, July 6.

Owing to my cold, I was so oppressed at the chest, and my voice so hoarse, I could with difficulty get through the morning service. In the evening I preached on the Gospel for the day, which inculcates reconciliation after having been offended. I may conscientiously say I have both forgiven and forgotten innumerable injuries and insults during my residence among this perverted people, for my own sake, but am decidedly of opinion it has not been the most conducive to their amendment.

Monday, July 7.

As Mr. Day was shearing his sheep, I called upon him respecting the tythe, and also to enquire about the Catholic Chapel at Downside, which is to be opened on Thursday for divine service, and a sermon preached by Dr. Coombes,[1] of Shepton Mallet; the whole of the service will be performed by Mr. Baines, the new Bishop, whom I heard a few weeks since at Bath. As Mrs. Wm. Skinner seemed anxious to witness the ceremony, I might add, acting on the occasion, I at first thought of accepting the invitation I had received by a circular letter and a ticket sent me by the Prefect, and I asked Day whether he thought the ladies might be admitted. He told me, as he should see Mr. Barber (the Prior of the College) in the evening, he would ask the question and let me know the result; but on second thoughts, I gave up the idea of going altogether, as it might have a prejudicial influence with the common people in the neighbourhood, who would think they were authorised to go constantly to that place of worship if they knew their Clergyman went once: my weaker brethren I should not wilfully mislead or put stumbling-blocks in their way. Day is an artful fellow to deal with, and he once told me he understood I had been preaching against the Catholics. He might, therefore, with good shew of reason say, Why does your Priest go and hear doctrines he himself condemns?

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[1] William Henry Coombes, D.D., 1767–1850.

Henry Hoare from Southfield called in the morning, and staid dinner; his Father, I understand, is still in the North.

Owen arrived from Winchester in the evening.

Tuesday, July 8.

After breakfast I wrote to Mr. Barber, the Prior of the Catholic College at Downside, thanking him for his polite attention in sending me a ticket for Thursday, excusing myself from attending, but asking, however, his permission that my brother, Russell, should avail himself of it in my stead. This note was forwarded by Russell from Radstock, when he went to dine there at the Boodles'.

Friday, July 11.

My brother returned from Chilcompton about the middle of the day, and gave a curious account of the masquerading scene he had witnessed in the Catholic chapel at Downside. Whenever the new Bishop, Dr. Baines, took off his mitre, Mr. Barber, the Prior of the college, kissed it, as well as his hand and ornaments during several parts of the ceremony; the sermon was preached by Dr. Coombes, on the Real Presence; on concluding it he said, "with his Lordship's permission," meaning the new Bishop, "he would bless the people." This reminds one of Swift's Epigram on the Prelate who left the altar to attend the Viceroy!

The whole party from the Parsonage, excepting my Mother and Anna, dined at Mr. Purnell's at Woodborough, and spent a pleasant evening, Captain and Mrs. Scobel being of the party, and the weather permitting us to take a stroll round the grounds and gardens after dinner. We afterwards played at cards, so that it was nearly eleven o'clock before we returned home.

Sunday, July 13.

After Church ten of the schoolgirls came to be examined previous to confirmation; others would have accompanied them had the weather been more favourable. After tea I walked with my Mother and the boys to Cridlingcot, calling in the way on Garratt in Wick Lane, who has been very feverish of late. He is not able to sit up in his bed, therefore the idea of teaching him to net must for the present be given up. I left his monthly allowance with him, up to Saturday. On going to Mrs. Kimberry's, one of the female Methodists passed me without the slightest inclination of the head, but, on the contrary, with a more marked elevation of it than usual. I should not have noticed this, had not another poor deformed creature passed me in the same ridiculous attitude. I then said to the boys I was sure some greater portion of spiritual gifts had been communicated to-day in their assembly than usual! Two young men of the Methodist persuasion, with whom I entered into conversation, expressed it as a decided opinion that all religious societies had a right to expound the scriptures their own way. When I said that it was not possible for uninstructed persons to do this, one of them replied that, when they had the gift of God, all things were possible; he said there was no reason that colliers should be despised if they had the gift of God and the grace to perform His commandments. I put the question to himself whether, if he had injured any part of his body, or had any inward complaint which required judgment to cure, would he send for a regular bred surgeon to attend him such as Mr. Crang or Mr. Flower, or go to old Crow, the horse doctor at Radstock. I am convinced little is to be gained by argument with the common people: si decipi vult vulgus. If the Government would only require certain qualifications in the ministers of the Dissenters with respect to their knowledge and principles, the mischief might be less extensive.

Sunday, July 20.

A wet morning; very few at Church in consequence. After service I heard the children their Catechism and explained the several Articles, as I did the preceding Sunday. In the evening the Church very full, and the people attentive. Two classes of the collier boys attended to say their Catechism after dinner, but could not recollect what they had formerly learned, and when I explained it to them they were so very ignorant and ill-behaved I did not think I could in conscience give them tickets for Confirmation. I therefore dismissed the whole—in number about fourteen, only giving a ticket to young Clarke, the schoolmaster's son, who said his very well. There were eighteen girls who passed, among them the daughter of Sarah Somer, who behaved so improperly lately, but on her promising amendment I gave her a ticket. The impropriety, not to say injustice, of Mrs. Jarrett's having dissolved the Sunday School which I established on my first coming to Camerton was never more exemplified than on the present occasion. The boys used to say their Catechism very well, and were pretty constant in their attendance at Church; the whole object of the lady in doing away with a benefit of such essential consequence to the Parish was no other than because she thought her authority was infringed by having a school to which she did not contribute one sixpence, and which had been supported by the Clergyman of the Parish for upwards of twenty years at his own expense. One need not turn to Shakespeare for a Kate, nor to Russia for a Catherine, the prototype exists at Camerton voce persona et re.

Monday, July 21.

Notwithstanding the weather was very wet and unpromising, I drove to Radstock to Boodle's to an early breakfast, and afterwards took him in the car to Frome, where we arrived a little after nine o'clock—in time to pay our respects to the Bishop of Gloucester, who officiated instead of the Bishop of Bath and Wells. There were about five hundred confirmed, and an impressive charge was afterwards delivered by Dr. Ryder; I mean impressive because it came from the heart. If I were disposed to cavil I might have said the worthy Bishop was carried a little too far by his feelings and fancy, when he told the young people that a number of good and evil spirits were then on the watch, either to confirm them in their good resolutions, or entice them to evil. Alas! poor human nature is of itself sufficiently weak, without the demoniacal assaults of the Angels of Darkness. However, if this personification of evil can produce more powerful effects on the minds of the ignorant, we may be permitted to employ the figure, if we can do so without exciting prejudice. Returned in the evening to Camerton.

Saturday, August 2.

A rainy morning, which confined me within doors the greater part of the time. I was occupied till bedtime in composing a sermon to further the subscriptions towards the National School, having received papers from the Bishop to require my exertions on that head. I was thus engaged till past eleven.

Little Joseph drove to my Mother's in the car to dinner, preparatory to his going to school on Tuesday.

Sunday, August 3.

The weather still very wet, so that there were few people at Church in the morning. During the service

I read the King's letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury respecting the National Schools, and declared my intention of preaching on the subject in the evening, which I accordingly did on the text: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." In the course of my sermon I lamented that we had now no boys' school at Camerton, and indicated that it was my wish to establish one in the Parish in connection with the National School; as it is absolutely necessary something should be done of the kind, as I found all instruction had been thrown away on those colliers' sons I examined for Confirmation, who had forgotten their Catechism, and everything they had learnt, in the space of a year when they ceased to be instructed.

Mrs. Jarrett as well as Mr. Gooch were present; the former seemed to be very attentive to the arguments I employed to shew that instruction after the mode pursued by the National School, and the discipline there encouraged, was far preferable to the desultory method of instruction practised by the sectarists. After Church I called on Mrs. Jarrett, and said it was my intention to appropriate a part of the glebe field called "Tatleys," near Tunley, for the purpose of building a schoolhouse, and also a place of residence for the master; as Mrs. Jarrett said she had objections to any places of the kind being erected on her estate this would obviate the difficulty, and I hoped I should meet with her aid in supplying funds for carrying my plans into execution. She replied, it certainly was contrary to her intention to do anything of the kind herself, but, if I arranged the plans and got assistance so as to enable me to execute them, she would have no objection to contribute her assistance. I might have said the Parish had a claim on her assistance in an essential manner, since the established schoolhouse had been pulled down by her Father, on condition of building it up again if it was wanted. However, I held my peace.

After tea I visited Garratt, the sick collier, and Mrs.

Kimberry. To the latter I gave twenty shillings, thirteen for her quarter's rent, and seven to procure a girl to attend her, as her weakness is now so great she ought not to be left alone. I also visited Joseph Goold, who is in a dangerous state with a violent inflammation on the lungs. He has been blooded, and Mr. Crang, I believe, thinks very unfavourably of his case.

Tuesday, August 5.

We drove to Bath to my Mother's. Joseph went early this morning in the car to meet the Southampton coach at the Cross Keys, in order to go to Romsey in his way to Twyford.

Wednesday, August 6.

I walked to Bath Hampton with Owen, [and] fished in the Avon, in order to instruct Owen in dapping; caught four or five dace in our walk along the river's side from Bath Hampton to Claverton.

Sunday, August 10.

I preached in the morning at Camerton a sermon, pointing out the advantages of education if properly directed, and the ills arising from the neglect of it. Mrs. Jarrett, I thought, did not seem much to approve of some parts of the discourse, as I now and then noticed an emphatic "hem." However, I am too old a soldier to be alarmed at squibs!

Thursday, August 14.

Still the same miserable weather; all my hay which has been cut down for this fortnight past in one of the glebe fields, by this time must be reduced to the state of manure. I do not go to witness the mischief, but take it en philosophe, for a very good reason—because I cannot help it.

Friday, August 15.

My morning was occupied in writing letters to Mr. Bailey, one of the proprietors of the Camerton Coal Works, to Purnell [of Woodborough], and to Mrs. Jarrett respecting their contributions towards a parochial school in connection with the National Association.

The evening proving fair, I walked with Owen to Clan Down. It is extraordinary, this wet weather, how many wasps' nests have been found in this immediate neighbourhood; no less than sixty have been taken at Camerton, and in the adjoining villages in proportion.

Sunday, August 17.

I preached at Timsbury in the morning, and buried Collins, poor man, who had destroyed himself in a fit of insanity, at Widcombe. Perhaps his family would have judged better to have interred him there, instead of making a more public exhibition in their own immediate neighbourhood; the churchyard was crowded.

Monday, August 25.

I wrote a letter to Dr. Gabell (Winchester) enclosing a draft for £56, the amount of Owen's last half year's schooling.

Owen went off early for Winchester.

Wednesday, September 3.

I was occupied the forepart of the day in overlooking the people in the hayfield. Having seen the remainder of the hay in a fair way to be carried before night, I walked with my guests Mr. Haggard, his daughter, and Anna. We returned in time to dress for dinner. Captain and Mrs. Parish, and two ladies staying with them, and Mr. and Miss James dined with us at Camerton.

Tuesday, September 9.

Having engaged one of the coal barges, I had it fitted up for the ladies with an awning and matting against the sides, and tables and chairs from the public-house, in which we proceeded about eleven o'clock to Combe Hay, where we visited the Mansion House, walked round the premises, and afterwards dined under the trees near the cascade. As the day was delightful, the whole party much enjoyed the excursion. I forgot to mention that Mrs. and Miss Newnham were with us; as the latter is a nice companion for my daughter, Anna, I asked her to sleep at the Parsonage, in order to accompany us the next day to Cheddar and Wells.

Wednesday, September 10.

In order to have the day before us we breakfasted at seven, and soon after set out on our excursion; Mr. Haggard, his daughter, and Anna in a chaise, Miss Newnham and myself in the car. We stopped at Chewton Mendip to examine the Romanised British remains in the vicinity of the Church, and the elegant tower of that edifice, and thence passing through Priddy, drove slowly, and walked through the cliffs with which my friends were highly gratified. We dined on our cold provisions at the little inn, and resumed our vehicles a little after three o'clock, proceeding through Rodney Stoke.

While the horses were baiting at Wells we had time to visit the cathedral and the exterior of the Bishop's palace, and, having deposited my young charge with her family at Chilcompton, I returned home a little after eight o'clock, my old mare having performed upwards of forty miles without the least appearance of fatigue to herself.

Thursday, September 11.

I answered Dr. Gabell's letter respecting Joseph's going directly to Winchester, and wrote to Mr. Bedford on the subject. I could have wished him to have staid a few months longer at Twyford; but as he might not secure a vacancy, I thought it better to accept at once Dr. Gabell's offer. I visited Mrs. Collins whose child is very ill, and naming it by her request.

Friday, September 12.

I walked to Radford to see Mrs. Collins; the child is still alive, and the poor woman in the greatest distress, it being an only child, and given to her after having been married eleven years without any. She does not seem to bear up at all; but who can reason against the feelings of a parent over a dying infant? You may tell her whatever is is right, but that is but poor consolation. I repeated to her the excellent moral inculcated in Parnell's "Hermit." The poor woman listened and cried; well might she have replied with our immortal bard, "Oh, who can hold a fire in his hand by thinking of the frosty Caucasus?" or in the words of Job to his friends, "All this I know as well as ye."

I was much concerned to hear that Captain Savage (of Midsomer Norton House), while shooting on Wednesday, had lost his thumb by the bursting of his powder horn. I immediately mounted my horse on my return home to enquire after him, and found from Miss Palmer that all was going on well.

Sunday, September 14.

I called on Mrs. Collins; the child is better, and, I hope, will do well.

Sunday, September 28.

I found Mrs. Jarrett had arrived at Camerton, but she was not at Church in the morning. I walked before evening service to Cridlingcot, and saw Mrs. Kimberry, who is on the point of death, but capable of listening to the prayers I offered up for her. After evening service I called on Mrs. Jarrett, who, more sua, was wonderfully gracious: "Il volto sciolto i pensieri stretti." But I will not touch on this subject. I spoke respecting the school, and my disappointment in not receiving assistance from the Coal Company. She said she had reason to believe they would give five pounds per annum towards the schoolmaster's salary, and perhaps the same sum towards the building, and advised my writing immediately to the National Association to see what assistance they would afford. I am fearful the onus will lie upon me, the same as I have hitherto experienced in the subscriptions to antiquarian research.

Sunday, October 5.

I preached at Camerton in the morning, and administered the Sacrament; in the evening there was a Christening, Churching, and the funeral of Mrs. Kimberry. I felt so much exhausted by the exertions of the day, that I went early to bed.

Monday, October 6.

I was busily occupied this morning in correcting some of the Journals, which I am sorry to see have been transcribed in too great a hurry by my brother [Russell]. About the middle of the day Mr. Peter Hoare and his lady, with Henry and his brother, arrived at the Parsonage. I had asked Mr. Knatchbull to meet them at dinner, but he was engaged. The evening was passed in looking over books of prints, coins, etc., etc.

Wednesday, October 8.

After an early dinner Mr. Peter Hoare and his family left us for Southfield, excepting Henry, who walked with me in the plantations. As we passed by Mrs. Jarrett's gate we saw that lady, who called to us and invited us to tea. I said my young friend and myself had determined on a long walk, and therefore declined her polite invitation; she said, as her tea hour was seven o'clock, it could not interfere with our walk, unless we chose to do so in the dark. She mentioned that two of my parishioners, Mrs. Gullick, my late tenant's wife, and a woman of the name of Padfield, were on the point of death, and this with a kind of air as though it conveyed a reproof for my not having visited them. I told her it was the first information I had received of their being ill: I accordingly determined on seeing them immediately. On arriving at Gullick's we found the family in a sad state, the poor woman being just dead; the children, seven in number, crying around their father, and the female relatives bustling about the deceased, who was upstairs, did not attend to comfort them. Finding that talking could afford but little consolation at that period, I desired one of the women to get some beer from [the public house], of which I gave half a glass to each of the children and a glass to Gullick, and was glad to perceive it acted as a cordial, and they became more composed. Having staid nearly half an hour, therefore, we went next door to Gullick, and found the poor woman Padfield very bad with the dropsy, and anxious to have prayers read to her, but there being no prayer book in the house I told her I would call next morning. The husband said he had *nothing to speak* *against the prayers of the Church, as they were very good.*

Returning home, I wrote a note to Mrs. Jarrett excusing myself from drinking tea, as I felt really unfit for company and cards, which I suppose would have accompanied our evening's conversation, as two old ladies and Mrs. Anne Stephens were staying with her.

Thursday, October 9.

Henry Hoare accompanied Heal to Day's farm and saw the tithing of the grazing lambs, and then proceeded home. I walked into the village and called at Gullick's, where the family were all at dinner. The sorrow of the children is vehement at first, but soon wears off; the poor man will feel it much more, because he will find his own comfort so much connected with his loss. But happy is it that people in the lower ranks of life are not possessed of the same sensibility as their superiors; certain am I that all things are conducted on a much more equal footing than they appear to be at first sight—if enjoyment be less, privation is in proportion.

Friday, October 10.

I found on getting up this morning that my outdoor servant, Heal, was not come to make the cyder; on going after breakfast to enquire respecting him, his mother said that she had some to make herself, and it was very hard that he should not assist her, as she could get none of the colliers to work for her. I said it would have been very easy to ask leave; that I had it in my power to punish him for leaving his work in this manner; that the week before he had left his work twice without even saying he was going; and if I went to Mr. Purnell I made no doubt he would grant a warrant, but I should not trouble myself to do so, but immediately get another person to finish my cider, and should have no further need of his service. The woman gave a kind of insolent smile, and said I was at liberty to do as I chose. I accordingly called at the Hopyards to speak to John Cook, and he promised to come to-morrow.

Sunday, October 19.

I preached in the morning on the text, "Teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples," shewing that a form of prayer [was] given us by our Saviour Himself, and pointing out the great loss the Methodists sustained by turning their backs on the Church Liturgy; in short, it was my duty to tell the people of my parish plainly that the doctrines taught at the Church and meeting house were not the same; that the prayers of the Church of England were composed by the best and wisest of men. The combination of the Catholics, Methodists, and Dissenters of all descriptions against the Church and State is now too openly proclaimed to be mistaken, and it was the duty of my parishioners to attend to me as long as they could be improved by what I delivered. Mr. Purnell, who was at Church, accompanied me to the Parsonage, stating he had a little business to settle. On arriving there he said he had called during the week, and found I was from home; that he had brought a stamp receipt, which I could antedate, for £15 he was indebted to me for the half-year's composition for Woodborough. I replied I could not think of antedating any paper of a Sunday especially, and begged to be excused from so doing. I therefore put up the three five-pound notes which he had laid on the table, and the stamp, and said I would call on him after breakfast on Monday morning, when we might settle the business. He is a strange man—very ignorant, certainly, and I apprehend has but very unstable notions of religion. Mr. Purnell has never received the Sacrament, excepting when he was to qualify himself for a magistrate, and I am sure in other respects—sed verbum sat sapienti.

Tuesday, October 21.

I walked to the Glebe house after breakfast, and spoke to John Cook on the subject of his going there. I told him candidly I had met with so much dishonesty and deception from the Camerton people, I was almost determined never to employ one of them again in my service; however, I would give him a trial to Lady Day. I then hinted at his wife being too fond of dress, saying that young Widcombe would have been now in prosperity had it not been for the misconduct of his wife in the first instance, which influenced his own. The man listened attentively, and replied I should never have reason to accuse him of dishonesty, and he should endeavour to do everything to shew his gratitude. I agreed to pay him eight shillings a week till Lady Day, as the house is fully worth two shillings a week more; indeed, he paid as much for the one he now occupied. I moreover gave him the crop of potatoes in the garden, which is fully worth five pounds, so that he begins his career under easy circumstances as far as respects myself, and I only hope he has no old debts to liquidate.

On driving into Bath I had a note put into my hands from Mrs. Gore, from which I understand she is about to be married. The step is rather precipitate, but I hope it will turn out well.

Thursday, October 23.

In the evening I drank tea with the Barkers. I find Mr. Barker[1] has put my large battle-piece on new canvas, and purposes doing so with the altar piece of Noah's sacrifice. I promised Miss Barker to have a proper book made to insert some elegant paintings she has lately finished.

Tuesday, October 28.

I drove into Bath, [and] I walked to the gasometer on the Bristol Road, where a balloon was filling under the direction of a Scotsman of the name of Graham. I do not think the thing itself would have had sufficient attractions to draw me from my way, unless Burrard had agreed I should meet him there. On my arrival, having paid a shilling for admission into a timber yard where the aerial vehicle was suspended, we continued nearly an hour in the open air, most of the time under a heavy shower of rain, till the signal was given and the gigantic ball ascended—the wife of Mr. Graham being his companion du voyage. Owing to the thickness of the atmosphere, the globe was soon out of sight; the course it took seemed to be over the Crescent, but there are so many currents of air it was impossible to determine where it would steer. For my own part I feel but little interest in these exhibitions, this being the third I have witnessed: the risque is certainly too great, and the benefits to be obtained too small to meet with encouragement from any but the inconsiderate vulgar.

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[1] Benjamin Barker the younger, 1776–1838, landscape artist, brother of the celebrated Thomas Barker, of Bath.

Thursday, November 6.

Roused to more active exertions by the account of an almost unheard-of piece of barbarity in a Christian country. A collier of the name of Hodges came to inform me that James Evans, an infirm pauper, who has been for a long time in a crippled helpless state through rheumatism, in the Camerton Poor House, had actually been left for ten days in his filth, so that maggots had bred in his flesh and eaten great holes in his body. Trusting that this account was not altogether as bad as represented, I sent some refreshment by the man who related it, and almost immediately followed him to the scene of misery. Two women I there found employed in washing his things, and, notwithstanding they had cleansed the object, who is almost childish and unable to help himself, from the nastiness in which he had been so long wallowing, the stench was intolerable. Finding Mr. Hicks, the Overseer, was from home, I spoke to Mr. Fear, the Bailiff of the Coal Works, and begged he would have an eye to this poor man. I also promised one of the women I would give her half-a-crown to attend him till Hicks returned, and then I would myself see that he did his duty. I have before understood this person is hard upon the poor. I afterwards visited poor Garratt, the collier, who is, I fear, in a dangerous state from a stoppage of water, which Mr. Flower does not seem able to remedy. Poor fellow, his sufferings have been extreme; it will indeed be a happy release if it pleases God to take him.

Friday, November 7.

Mrs. Hicks, the Overseer's wife, called after breakfast to exculpate herself and her husband from any charge of neglect which might be brought against them on account of James Evans, by endeavouring to lay the whole of the blame on Mrs. Mitcham, a poor woman who used to assist the people in the Poor House; but I think this is nonsense, since Hicks never gave any additional allowance to this woman for so doing, and besides the woman has not strength herself, being aged, to attend on so helpless a being as Evans, and lift him from his bed when he needed it. I pointed out all these circumstances, and moreover said, if the man had died through neglect, the blame certainly would have lain at her husband's door, and it would have been a very serious thing for him to have answered before the Magistrates of the County.

Saturday, November 8.

Poor Garratt, the collier, died this morning, also Evans, the miserable creature in the Poor House.

Sunday, November 9.

After service I called on Garratt's wife in Wick Lane. From her account he could not have suffered much pain, as the mortification must have taken place, I conceive, shortly after I had seen him. I really believe the poor fellow was in every respect prepared to undergo the change from this troublesome state to a better; if patient, suffering resignation and firm confidence in the just dispensations of Providence entitle us to the rewards of a future state, this humble, unostentatious Christian will receive them. Oh, that all were such!

I preached in the evening on the text, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." I never wish to appear the least personal in my remarks from the pulpit, but I thought the occurrence of last week entitled me to make the distinction between works of actual benevolence and Christian charity, and mere professions. Hicks, the

Overseer, and his family were present. Instead of thinking they were preached at I hope they will apply to themselves the general ideas contained in my discourse, which, indeed, we all should attend to more than we do in our dealings with our fellow creatures. May I be more on my guard in future, and imitate the pattern set before me of forbearance and resignation. Even the uninstructed Garratt was my superior in this respect.

Saturday, November 15.

The weeks pass rapidly, and I cannot produce any satisfactory employment of my time, which weighs on my mind. I hope I may be able to live a little to myself, but, under the circumstances in which I am placed, if I do not enter into society I shall be excluded altogether. Well may I exclaim, "Ubi lapsus, quid feci? sed spero meliora."

Tuesday, November 18.

Mr. Flower, the apothecary, in compliance with my request, sent his bill for medicine, etc., for the collier, Garratt. It amounted to twelve pounds, but as his operation on the poor man had not been attended with success, he said he would take half the sum. I wrote a letter to Mrs. Jarrett, who had promised to go half the expense with me, enclosing the bill, and stating I thought the Parish ought to pay one third, which would bring our division to two guineas apiece. I drove to Priston [Rectory] to dine with Mr. Hammond, a little after four o'clock. We did not go into the dining-room till half-past six, and had an entertainment better suited to Grosvenor Square than a clergyman's home—French dishes and French wines in profusion. I hope such feasts will not be repeated often, or I am sure I shall not be one of the guests. I drove home at eleven o'clock!

Sunday, November 23.

On going to the Church before Service, I found Joseph Goold had gotten a tombstone to be erected to the memory of his wife. On reading the inscription I perceived it was there stated that a beloved sister had caused the stone to be set up. What a satire on poor human nature! the husband who, when the woman was alive, treated her with every kind of brutality, and left her to perish through his neglect, endeavours to make his atonement by a monument, and the sister who employs the epithet "beloved" to the poor creature, who was burnt to death when she was incapable of taking care of herself, never once assisted her as a sister should have done during her mental infirmities, nor pleaded with the father that she should be properly taken care of; but now, for the honour of the family, goes to the expense of a memorial, bedecked with full-faced angels and humbug hour-glasses. I would have remitted Goold the fee for putting up the monument if he had permitted me to add only these words at the bottom of the stone: "Mirabile dictu! Codex carnifex floreat."

After Church, J. Rossiter and Feare stopped to speak to me concerning the allowance of the old people, which I had before mentioned to them as having too little—twenty pence not being at all adequate to the expenditure of a person incapable of doing work. They agreed with me in opinion, and Feare had spoken to Hicks, the Overseer, on the subject. It was agreed by us that in future the old people should have two-and-sixpence a week. I moreover [stated] that I expected the poor books to be brought every month Sunday as they used to be, that I might inform myself of the actual state of the poor.

I attended a Vestry in the Church respecting the poor. Garratt's widow requested the Parish would continue the five shillings she received weekly for herself and two small children, saying she would contrive to pay one-half the house-rent if the Parish would pay the other. It was therefore agreed to let her have five shillings.

I read a sermon in the evening to the servants, as I was accustomed to do in times past.

Tuesday, November 25.

John Goold (my servant) went to Chilcompton with a draft for Mr. Flower for Garratt's bill, £6 6*s*. 0*d*., and to Oakhill to settle the brewer's account there. The evening was spent in my study.

Thursday, November 27.

Visited the Red Post, where the unfortunate man, Lloyd, seems dying from the same cause his wife died before him, namely, excessive drinking. The man himself seems in a sad shaken state, and probably is at times wandering in his ideas; the apparition of Lippeatt, who lost his life by falling into the quarry a few months since, had been seen by him; also a certain gentleman in black, by the colliers denominated the Devil, had made him a visit in his bedroom. These are, of course, the inventions of the vulgar; but he cannot be here long, as his appetite has entirely failed him, and there is every indication of a speedy dissolution. Alas! the wages of sin is death.

Sunday, November 30.

Having previously engaged to do duty at Wellow for Mr. Gardener, who is from home, I drove there after breakfast, taking the Red Post public house by the way. The man, Lloyd, is somewhat better, but never can last long. I found Mr. West smoking and drinking there; on my telling him it was contrary to the regulations of the Magistrates to be in a public house during the time of Church Service, he was disposed to kick against their authority, but became more submissive when I spoke firmly to him.

Thursday, December 4.

I received a bill of £8 15*s*. 0*d*. from Cruttwell, the lawyer, absolutely for doing nothing. This is the second time I have paid him the same amount for merely writing letters to the tithepayers, without taking any further trouble. I certainly shall freely express my sentiments.

Sunday, December 7.

I preached in the morning on the Advent. Mrs. Jarrett with Miss Fry, daughter to the steward, and

Mr. Purnell were present. I mention the latter gentleman as I have not seen him for a long time. I walked with him half up the plantations hoping he would have recollected something respecting his promised assistance to the Parish School; but he was silent on that head.

Monday, December 8.

I drove into Bath after breakfast, to be in preparation for the great event which is to take place the ensuing day.

Tuesday, December 9.

After breakfast Russell and myself walked to Walcot Church; Mrs. Gore and her sister preceded us in chairs. Having witnessed the union of Captain Campbell and Mrs. Gore, we returned to my Mother's to dinner. The happy pair drove off to Clifton, having partly promised to spend two or three days at the Parsonage on their return from that place.

Wednesday, December 17.

Having gotten my feet wet in crossing the brook in Smallcombe Valley, a severe cold was the consequence. I felt it coming on before I went to bed, and I could scarcely read prayers to the servants, I was so hoarse, and my cough was very violent.

The boys came over from Bath for their [Christmas] holidays, having been with my Mother since Monday.

Saturday, December 20.

I took some James's Powders[1] on going to bed last night, which somewhat relieved me. I have left off meat and every stimulant.

Monday, December 22.

Somewhat better this morning, my chest being relieved and my cough less violent. Mr. Barter called after breakfast, and said that, hearing from Mr. Hammond I was unwell, he came to see me. He moreover said he had spoken to Mr. Crang, the apothecary, to come and pay me a visit the following day. I told him I should have sent for him myself had my pulse continued full, but I was sure there was no need of bleeding now.

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[1] A famous eighteenth-century patent medicine.

Tuesday, December 23.

Still better: I attribute a great deal to James's Powders—an excellent medicine, acting as a sudorific, and to living low. Mr. Crang called in the middle of the day, and said my pulse was rather low than otherwise; he advised me by no means to think of doing duty on Christmas Day and the Sunday following, and promised to send me some drafts.

Wednesday, December 24.

Smallcombe's son came to me to say he wanted to be married to-morrow, as his banns were asked out. I desired the servants to tell him I could not do so myself, neither could Mr. Hammond, and that he ought to have given a longer notice. However, as the man was very pressing, I wrote a note to Mr. Boodle, who promised to come over in the morning [from Radstock].

Owen reads the prayers to the servants at night, and I think it will be of service to remove the impediment in his speech, to make him read occasionally out loud.

Thursday, December 25.

I cannot say my sleep was disturbed, but my waking hours certainly were by the ringing of bells about seven o'clock announcing the joyous day, when half the Parish at least will be drunk.

Mr. Hammond performed evening service; and there were no less than six christenings.

I was occupied part of the morning in reading in the Hebrew Bible.

Saturday, December 27.

Smallcombe, who was married Christmas Day, and whose wife was brought to bed the same day, sent his child to be named, as they are fearful it will die.

Monday, January 3, 1824.

Sir Richard Hoare having invited me to attend the Annual Meeting of the gentlemen engaged with himself in examining the Antiquities of Wiltshire, I left home this morning at twelve, taking with me a report of the Antiquities of Camerton, also a letter addressed to Sir Richard, requesting him to present this communication to the Antiquarian Society. The road to Stourhead was so much impeded by the snow I could not take the usual course through Mells and Nunney as I wished, in order to enable me to call upon Mr. Peter Hoare, but I was obliged to strike off from Kilmersdon to Buckland Down, and so on to Frome. On arriving at that place my mare was so much fatigued by the drift on the road, especially between Radstock and Kilmersdon, I was constrained to stop for an hour to bait. During this time I saw Mr. Champneys (of Orchardleigh), who was just returned from Stourhead, who told me that with four horses to his carriage he had been scarcely able to reach Frome from thence, and recommended my taking a cart-horse as leader to the mare. Knowing Mr. Champneys had rather what the French call a façon de parler I did not take all literally, and accordingly pursued my way as I intended, and found no very great difficulties to Maiden Bradley, but was constrained to move slowly beyond this village as the roads were much less taken care of—I mean by removing the snow, which had fallen so deep as to equal the tops of the hedges.

However, a track had been cut out for the coal carts passing to the pits for a supply of that commodity, more than ever necessary at this trying time, which I was enabled to proceed on, though at a foot's pace. I never remember to have experienced anything like the cold whilst driving from Maiden Bradley to Stourhead, and my nose and ears were so much affected I hesitated once or twice whether I should not dismount and rub them with the snow, according to the Russian recipe; our delays were such, it was nearly six before we arrived at Stourhead. I say "we" because I had taken my servant with me by desire of Sir Richard, as his party was larger than usual. I found dinner was over; but the worthy owner of the mansion left the company to see proper care taken of me, and after a hearty meal on a smoking hot beef steak I joined the party in the dining-room, consisting of Lord Arundel of Wardour, Mr. Merick, Mr. C. Bowles, and Mr. Offley; Mr. Wansey had excused his attendance on account of the weather. On comparing notes I found my difficulties had not been unique, since Lord Arundel, who had four horses, had been upwards of three hours in coming from Wardour. After coffee we had a rubber of whist, in which I came off a gainer of 7s.—much beyond my expectations, as I so seldom play, and my antagonists were experienced men. Sir Richard, being so deaf, finds a relaxation in having his evening rubber; he was my partner, Lord Arundel and Mr. Merick were opponents.

Tuesday, January 4.

I was downstairs a little after eight, and in the library in order to make references. Mr. Offley soon after joined me, and Mr. Charles Bowles, of Shaftesbury, who is engaged in one of the Wiltshire Hundreds, as well as Lord Arundel and Mr. Offley. Mr. Wansey, who has his part assigned him as I have before mentioned, did not appear. These gentlemen, I find, are principally engaged in tracing the descents of the landowners in their different districts, which they are enabled better to do by consulting the records and topographical accounts so admirably arranged in Sir Richard Hoare's collection. Indeed, I believe there is not a library in the kingdom so well supplied in these subjects as that at Stourhead, since not only all the public documents of Domesday and the Tower, but every private collection is so admirably arranged that Sir Richard can put his hand on the minutest book at a moment's notice. As my beat was not that of topography, I got to the folios of ancient times, and made extracts from Seneca, respecting the deification of Claudius and Pliny, respecting the distance of Camalodunum from Mona, also respecting the quantities of lead, which he describes to have been found in Britain more than in any part of the Roman territories. I had previously taken notes, but wished to refer to the originals. After breakfast we resumed our stations in the library, and I soon perceived my associates, although their pursuits were in a different beat, were not less eager than myself after antiquarian game, and we occupied the first part of the morning without any kind of interruption till we were summoned to take refreshments in the dining-room, after which Lord Arundel, Mr. Bowles, and myself took a walk through the snow to visit Mr. Howarden, the Catholic priest settled at Stourton; for Lord Stourton, when he parted with the estate to Sir Richard Hoare's ancestors, reserved to himself an ancient mansion called Bonhams, in which a priest had constantly resided in order to administer to the spiritual necessities of the Catholics in the neighbourhood. Unfortunately Mr. Howarden was from home, but Lord Arundel showed me the Chapel attached to the house, which seemed in a very dilapidated state: I find it is in contemplation to build a new one. . . . If all Catholics were as devoid of bigotry as Lord Arundel there would be nothing to fear, indeed not only that, but an union might be effected without the smallest difficulty, for I have not yet heard an opinion fall from his lips which the most orthodox might not agree in: this cannot be termed art or management in a man of his lordship's rank, although it might bear that appearance in a Jesuit. I am decidedly against the Catholic claims, taken as a political measure; still, where there are such liberal-minded men who are excluded from a participation of what the most worthless and irreligious actually do enjoy, it then assumes rather an injurious appearance. The priest at Bonhams takes pupils; we saw several children on the premises, who receive instruction, some as preparatory, I suppose, to the ministry. Let us calmly ask the question, Are not these likely to become as good citizens and subjects as the puritanical levelling Methodists and Presbyterians? But enough of this. We called on our return on Mr. Crocker, to look at the plan he had lately taken of the camp at Hamden Hill, near Montacute. It was here that I felt a great chill, occasioned by wet boots, and could not recover any warmth the whole of the evening, which was concluded by a rubber of whist as the preceding.

Wednesday, January 5.

I passed a very restless night, and had the mortification to find my cold and cough as bad as it was after quitting Stourhead two months ago; I therefore determined to confine myself to the library, as the best latitude in all respects during this astonishing cold weather. The morning was engaged in making extracts from Diodorus Siculus, there being a most splendid edition of that author, with a Latin translation facing the Greek. I was fully occupied in making extracts from Diodorus the whole of the morning, excepting half an hour spent in looking over a recent publication on the Antiquities of Colchester, which Sir Richard put into my hands; unfortunately the author, in his anxiety to prove this to have been the Camalodunum of Tacitus, makes the Romans engaged in forming walls around the station of the colony, on their immediate settlement on the spot, entirely militating against what the historian states, that the occasion of their surprise and defeat by the Britons was because they had no walls or fortifications. The whole seems a flimsy production.

Thursday, January 6.

I made extracts this morning from Ptolemy's Geography, who speaks of Camalodunum of the Brigantes and Camelodunum of the Trinobantes, with the places in the immediate neighbourhood of both.

Friday, January 7.

This morning was principally devoted to examining the monkish Annals of Atford. . . . My cold had so much increased, and my cough so troublesome, I had very little pleasure in my studies this morning. However, I was determined not to be unemployed.

Saturday, January 8.

After breakfast I took leave of my kind host, having ordered a chaise from the inn: being fearful of encountering the eastern blast: and sent home my car by my servant. Changing horse at Frome, I called on Mr. Hoare at Southfield, and got home, though not without some difficulty, about four o'clock, the roads being a sheet of ice; my cold very indifferent, and I went to bed early—not without dread of the duty of the following day, my chest being very sore with coughing.

* * *

Sunday, July 4.

The evening service having concluded I walked afterwards about the premises, and am much pleased to see everything in such order, which speaks well for the servants during my [late] absence. I read prayers to them about ten, and purpose assembling them regularly in the morning, as soon as I am a little settled, as well as in the evening, as it may easily be done by fixing eight as the constant hour for breakfast and requiring their attendance a little before. John may then contrive to be indoors with the rest.

Monday, July 5.

My hay is got in pretty well, also the tythe clover, in quantity about seven tons. Before I went to bed I amused myself with the Roman Missal, which I bought in Town, and which I can read with tolerable ease; it consists of extracts from the Psalms, in Latin, and prayers to the Virgin and Saints, some of them in old French. From the characters employed I cannot think it less than four centuries old; several leaves have been taken away, which renders it less valuable in the eyes of a collector, but it answers my purpose very well as forming a link between the MS. of Ulpian and the black letter book Warren gave me. I feel the comfort of returning to my quiet habitation: pray God it may continue so.

Tuesday, July 6.

As it rained for several hours after breakfast I occupied the greater part of the time in my study, putting my books to rights on the shelves, and arranging my Journals when taken from their repositories—the iron chests.

Tuesday, July 13.

Having spent three or four hours in my study looking over my new purchase, "Dugdale's Monasticon," I drove to my Mother's; the weather insufferably hot, with an appearance of thunder. I found both her and my brother (Russell) nearly convalescent, and the boys quite well; Owen very much grown, being nearly as tall as myself.

Friday, July 16.

Mr. B. Barker, the painter, has entirely completed his obliging undertaking respecting my two paintings, the battle piece and the still more ancient picture of Noah's Sacrifice, which, now it is removed or rather translated from the old canvas and placed in its newly gilded frame, makes a very respectable appearance. The subject is certainly executed by the hand of an ancient master, but whether Titian was that master, as Mr. Barker supposes, or not, better connoisseurs must determine; at any rate both paintings will make a conspicuous figure in the Parsonage.

It was agreed that a dancing master should attend the lads at my Mother's house twice a week, and they are to drive in (from Camerton) to take lessons. I also wish them to improve in writing this vacation, as these things are not attended to at a public school. Could French be added to the list of acquirements during their leisure time, it would be very desirable; but we must not strain the bow too tight at first. In the evening I went with the children to the brow of Hampton Down to see Graham ascend in his balloon from Sidney Gardens.

Wednesday, July 21.

My boys drove in to Bath this morning early to take a second lesson in writing of a Mr. Lewis, who professes to instruct his pupils in a good running hand in six lessons for a guinea; each of my boys is also learning dancing of a Mr. Saunders, who comes to Upland House and instructs my daughter, Anna, at the same time. Neither dancing nor writing are at all attended to at a public school, and yet they enter more into the common usages of the world than either Latin or Greek. I wish I could also add French to the acquirements of the vacation; but, as they are very good boys, I do not like too much to break in on their time.

Friday, July 23.

I spoke to Cook respecting taking charge of a Sunday School after Michaelmas, for I have been arranging it so that he may have the same salary I used to pay the former master, Clark, who has been dismissed by Mrs. Jarrett, about £11 per annum, which will be a comfortable addition to his income; and he is fully competent for the task, as he both reads and writes very well; and now the Farm House is enlarged, from fifty to sixty boys may be accommodated with ease. I shall speak to my servant, John Goold, to assist, and as I shall attend constantly myself we may bring the whole, I trust, into some order and regularity before Christmas. At any rate I am sure of one thing, it will not be done at all unless I take the whole business on myself, as my neighbour Purnell and the proprietors of the Coal Works, I am sure, had rather the lower orders should not have this advantage, if their sentiments were really known. Possibly I may hereafter get a little aid from Mrs. Jarrett, when she sees it in good training, as I have her promise in writing. Unless she were first and foremost in the business, and possessed the whole and sole authority as to who were to be admitted and who dismissed, etc., etc., she would never cordially lend her assistance. As I shall endeavour to excite emulation by prizes among the scholars, five or six pounds will be requisite to dispose of in this manner, besides the books. John will derive benefit as to his own spelling and reading by attending the classes.

I continued in the hayfield till quite dusk; my chest much better, and my cough gone. This I attribute to living on a vegetable diet and fruit for the most part, which keeps the bowels open without the aid of medicine. I only take one glass of wine and toast and water at dinner, and very little meat: some days none.

Monday, July 26.

My servant John contrived to break the knees of my favourite mare by driving her up a place which was never intended for a cart to pass, and thus throwing her down on her knees. I have had her nearly five years, and there never was a more sure-footed animal in the world. I rather would have lost all my hay than this should have happened. I could not help saying a Somersetshire boor treats a horse like a part of the cart he drives him in.

Wednesday, July 28.

I find I have no leisure for study, and shall not therefore attempt it while the boys are at home: "Non semper arcum tendit Apollo."

Thursday, July 29.

The boys wished me to fish with them in the brook near Wick Lane, which I did, but finding the trout did not rise to the fly I left them shortly after; they continued fishing till nearly dinner-time. In the cool of the evening I tried the fly and grasshopper, without success, and being fearful of the damp near the brook returned before the evening closed in. I did not send for the servants in to prayers, but after I had read them to the boys went to bed; indeed, I felt very uncomfortable at John's conduct, who ought to act with more regard to my interest.

Sunday, August 1.

I made arrangements about the Sunday School with Cook and his wife, and desired them to assemble the boys who were willing to attend on the ensuing Sunday.

Sunday, August 8.

I spoke to Cook about the Sunday School, and got a list of the boys already coming, which amount to 33. I desired they would be there by nine o'clock next Sunday, when I purpose attending with my boys, to examine how far they have learnt, and divide them into classes. I should suppose we shall begin with fifty, which will be quite enough for the present. Cook will be appointed to the first class, my servant John Goold to the second, and Cook's wife for the younger children. I have desired the boys, Owen and Joseph, to purchase some small cards when they go next to Bath, and write on them, "Camerton Boys' School." These will be given every Sunday to the boys who behave well, and are regular in their attendance; if they do what is reprehensible, they will forfeit a ticket, or more, in proportion to their faults. Half-yearly the number of tickets each retains will be taken, and everyone who possesses twelve will be entitled to a book as a reward. I expect to bring them shortly into good order, at any rate I will make the effort, as I am fully assured of its importance. They were a very nice set of children who came to-day, none above twelve years of age, and some not above six. I shall purchase the necessary books, and have everything ready by next Sunday.

Sunday, August 15.

I went to the Glebe House a little after nine and, notwithstanding the rain, found 39 boys assembled, also a lad from Radstock, whom Boodle lent me as a director at the first arrangement of the school, as Cook knows nothing of the business of instruction as now carried on. I divided the boys into three classes; about twenty can read in the Testament, thirteen in the spelling book, and the remainder have just begun to spell.

I then walked to the Hopyards to visit the younger Bacon, who lies dangerously ill of a liver complaint. I read a portion of the prayers contained in the Communion Service, and had a good deal of serious conversation. He, poor man, prays for quiet, which he is not likely to obtain in his present residence, as his wife's mother, Mrs. Harris, is a noisy reprobate woman. I found Bacon very weak and struggling for breath, but his room was very close, so I persuaded him to open the window a little. He seems very resigned.

Monday, August 16.

My boys engaged to attend young Newnham and Langford fishing in the brook; their two companions, with young Peter Hoare, came to breakfast: the whole party went afterwards to fish in the Cam. On my return I found the lads had had good success with their fishing, but young Newnham only caught one, as he thought it cruel to use a worm, and only fished with paste. I really believe he is an excellent young man, although he may in some instances carry his ideas too far.

Friday, August 20.

Having heard that young Tyler was killed by a stone falling on him in the Coal Pit last night, I went to the house and found his body had been brought home and was laid in the cottage, but was very properly covered up, as it was much disfigured. His wife, who is far advanced in pregnancy, did not seem much afflicted.

Saturday, August 21.

I continued the greater part of the morning in my study, writing and arranging my papers respecting the ancient history of Camalodunum, which I wish my brother to transcribe anew with the alterations I have recently made; I also set the map of the district traced by Captain Scobel for me, on calico, in order to render it portable, as a pocket map, that I may mark down the Antiquities in every Parish with some degree of certainty, and notwithstanding the objection which Sir Richard Hoare once made while alluding to these several events: "Oh, Skinner, you will bring everything at last to Camalodunum; be content with what you have already discovered, if you fancy too much you will weaken the authority of real facts," I shall be inclined, if health permit, to persevere in my undertaking.

Sunday, August 22.

I preached this morning at Camerton, and I found in the course of my sermon I could with great ease to myself make allusion to passages connected with the subject of which I treated in the Lessons of the day. I feel convinced that with a little practice, I could express myself without any kind of hesitation; not that I ever mean to adopt extemporaneous preaching. I afterwards walked to Timsbury across the fields. In my way I stopped at Tyler's house at Daglan, and was destined to see the exhibition of the mangled face of the poor collier as he lay in his coffin. Surely the lower orders cannot have the same feelings as we have, otherwise they could take no delight in exposing what ought with the greatest care to be concealed, or in visiting what must convey sensations of horror rather than those of satisfaction. I dare say the cottage has been thronged the whole of the morning.

Monday, August 23.

In the course of the last week the tame pigeon died, which my children have had for nearly eight years; one of the servants trod on his foot by accident, and I suppose otherwise injured him. Owen and Joseph prepared a grave, and asked me to give them an inscription for his tombstone, which was as follows, cut on the white lias:

Hic jacet in Tumba
Formosa Columba
Thomas vocata
Dolore humata.

For their faithful dog, Myrtle, they also prepared a monumental record to be placed over his grave, commemorating his attachment and the catastrophe which occasioned his death, in these words:

Hic jacet Myrtelis
Canis fidelis
Cum sit venatus
Plumbo necatus.

These are trifling things in themselves, yet if they tend to encourage feeling and affection, ought to be attended to in the education of young people.

Tuesday, August 24.

The melancholy occurrences of the last week cast an inexpressible gloom over my mind. I will again aver, if we are to judge of the signs of the times: what with Joanna Southcott, Prince Hoenloe [Hohenlohe], the Priest Carrol, and the followers of the ambitious adventurer John Wesley: the minds of men will not be permitted to expand, but Novelty will continue to be the food of ignorance, to the exclusion of all wholesome provision—sed eheu satis!

Sunday, August 29.

I preached on the subject of Confirmation in the morning, shewing that even those who could not read might easily join in the excellent Liturgy of the Church, and have the rules of their duty towards God and towards man properly explained to them if they only constantly attended their Church; that to those young people who were about to take upon themselves to answer for their Christian profession it was doubly requisite, and I purposed explaining the promises made for them at the time of their Baptism, which promises, now they were come of sufficient age, they were themselves bound to perform. I should also enlarge upon the ceremony of Confirmation, established in the early ages of the Church and continued to the present time, and I hoped my hearers would bestow their attention to what I was enabled to deliver to them. The people were very attentive.

My two sons officiated at the Sunday School in my stead, and reported well of the general behaviour of the children.

Friday, September 3.

I rose at six in order to breakfast with the boys, and it was the last time I had to see them before they went to school.

Sunday, September 5.

I walked to the school before Church. I was sorry to observe the children did not attend at the appointed hour, not more than a third of the school being assembled; but Cook and his wife seem very careless and indifferent about the whole concern, and I fear I shall have to part with them.

Monday, September 6.

I received a letter from Owen, announcing safe arrival at Winchester. I then prepared for going to Mells, it being the quarterly meeting of the Clergy, and had proceeded as far as Ammerdown when a violent thunderstorm overtook me and completely wetted me through, so I was constrained to return home. I dined on poached eggs and bacon a little after four, and retired to my study, where I spent as useful an evening at least as though I had executed my first intention of spending it with my clerical brethren.

Wednesday, September 8.

About the middle of the day I called on Bacon at Meadyates, and sat an hour with him. During our conversation he remarked how much evil communication was carried on in the gaols, where persons, for small faults comparatively, mixed with those who were incarcerated for crimes of greater magnitude. He had been sent to Shepton on a charge of poaching, although at the time he certainly was not guilty, having been found merely with a dog following at his heels in a grass field, without a gun, and on the footpath. (Mr. Bampfylde was the magistrate who had his mittimus signed), yet this man was sent to prison, and during his confinement associated with sheep-stealers and horse-stealers, and was made acquainted with all their tricks. I also learnt from him that one of the Camerton people, of the name of Crocum, has stolen a horse; and it is supposed he will be in danger of his life as this is not his first offence, and his father was hanged for the same malpractices. Bacon seems very sincere in his professions—that should it please God to restore him he will be quite a different being; but I fear he will never get about again.

Saturday, September 11.

I dined at Mr. Purnell's (Woodborough). After dinner we played at cards, which I have had more than my share of lately; and the evening being very stormy Mr. Purnell offered me a bed, which I was glad to accept.

Sunday, September 12.

I returned to my parsonage before breakfast. I then rode to the Glebe School House; the boys were assembled in good order, but Mrs. Cook pays no attention to them now, John Goold and the Radstock boy having the principal management, and there are too many of them for these to take care of.

I preached my concluding sermon on Confirmation, although not one single candidate has yet offered. The Church was well attended; Mrs. Jarrett and her son, Stephen, were there. I called on them after service, and had *a very gracious reception*; but I must be on my guard, for every word is noted down that passes the door of my lips when I am in company with this lady and her promising son, otherwise I shall have cause to regret having uttered anything before them.

Monday, September 13.

Stephen Jarrett called after dinner. I had seen him in the morning, when I went to the Glebe Farm, shooting at a pheasant, which he wounded, and it fell in my twelve-acre field. He did not see me. I asked whether he had any sport, and said I believed he had hit the bird he shot at, as it fell in my field, and that some of the shot came pretty close to me! He said he did not see me: that he had killed a cock pheasant, and begged I would not mention the circumstance, as he should be subject to a fine of £10 for shooting before October. He then admired the painted glass in the Parsonage windows, saying they must have cost me a great deal, and as they were fixtures he supposed they must go with the Parsonage, as I could have no power to remove what had once been put up. He then said that he supposed *he* should have the advowson, as it was not mentioned in the writings which gave his brother the estate, but that he should not present Gooch to it, as he should insist on the clergyman's residing; that for himself, although of no profession, he had a great regard for the interests of the Church. He then asked whether I meant to bring up my son, Owen, in that line. I said, "No"; that he intended studying the law. "Oh! then he will have a silk gown, like our undress gowns; indeed he may be taken for a gentleman commoner, and I should be happy to shew him any civilities at Oxford." I know not which to admire most, the ignorance or impudence of this puffed-up young man. To speak to a clergyman respecting what he himself designed to do with his preferment after his death is what rarely occurs, but the looking forward to that event, even as to the disposal of the glass in his windows, is mean and contemptible in the extreme. But from a briar one does not gather mulberries.

Tuesday, September 14.

I have not attempted any regular course of study connected with the main work I have in hand, but many hours I lie awake in the night have been occupied in comparative etymology, and I trust I am now quite perfect in that system which, I have no manner of doubt, will one of these days throw great light on primitive language. Although life and all its concerns hang but lightly on me, I still should wish to be spared till I have completed this work I am anxious to bequeath to posterity. To me indeed study has been a shield and safeguard against the evils of life, for when I find myself ruffled either by the knavery or ingratitude of my fellow creatures I retire to my books and to my private meditations, as a hermit would do to his cell, where the storm may blow hard above me but I do not longer heed it. How ardently do I desire to devote the remainder of my days to the acquisition of true knowledge by tracing the bountiful providence of the Almighty through His works, to elevate my thoughts and expectations to a more perfect stage of existence without any alloy of misery. But enough on this head. Happier is the country clergyman in his closet than the bishop in the House of Lords or the Archbishop at the Coronation.

1825

Saturday, January 1, 1825.

I DROVE Boodle into Bath to attend a Turnpike Meeting, where I qualified myself to vote on the question whether the Radstock Hill was not a proper object to employ the attention of the Trust as being on the great public road, in preference to a hill near Twerton. Sir J. Hippisley in the chair, and such a chairman never before did I witness. Instead of hearing calmly and impartially what each side of the question had to say, he got up and advocated the cause he had espoused. Indeed, that the said Baronet did not possess the same upper stowage as Solomon it would have been clearly ascertained at this one exhibition, where the worthy gentleman gave us all to understand that he was Asinus Maximus. Old Thomas, the Quaker, spoke good sense. "Let us first," said he, "consider the state of our funds, whether we are able to spend any money whatever in improvements; if not, let us wait till we have the power, and then see the best means for employing it." I left the meeting fully resolved not to visit such a motley assembly again, where men seem openly advocating their private interests, under the specious name of consulting for the public good.

Sunday, January 2.

I performed service in the morning, and preached a sermon on the Commencement of the New Year, exhorting my hearers to form and persevere in good resolutions.

Tuesday, January 18.

Owen has a cough which I do not like, and have requested he will continue within doors of an evening, and not accompany his brother bat fowling. He has grown so fast I dread anything like a lasting cough on the lungs.

Wednesday, January 19.

I have discovered a new means of exercise, that is, by running up and down stairs a dozen times at a stretch, and then walking along the passage, which measures exactly 30 feet in length; there are 14 stairs, so that pacing backwards and forwards will give 168 stairs in 12 descents and ascents, and walking 24 times along the passage at 10 yards each time will give 240 yards. This, repeated alternately for an hour, will afford as strong an exercise as can be required, indeed much stronger than horse exercise or common walking. The further I advance in life the more requisite does exercise become; I can well afford two or three hours in the day for this medicine, the best of all others, and I must resolve to take it.

Friday, January 21.

My housekeeper, Mrs. Williams, was so very impertinent after dinner, I was obliged to say I should part with her this day month.

Saturday, January 22.

In my study I am at least tranquil and comfortable, and find my reading turns to good account. I feel my intellectual powers now ripe; I hope they will produce some fruit before I depart hence, and shew I have not lived in vain, but the Great Disposer of all events will direct me and my studies to assist the new era which is about to break upon the world. He will permit me to live to accomplish my object, which is simply the investigation of Truth. Oh! my God! I am the work of Thy hands; dispose of me and mine as most fitting to Thee.

Sunday, January 23.

I read prayers in the morning, and preached in the evening on the subject of Private Prayer. I strongly recommended a constant attendance on the public worship of God, and declared to my hearers that it was their duty to repeat the Lord's Prayer at least morning and evening, with attention to the meaning it conveyed, and instruct their children to do the same and hear them repeat it under their roof; that, if they wished to enlarge their stock of prayers, there were Collects appointed for every week in the year; some of these were excellent prayers for daily use, and the collection of Psalms some of the most beautiful models of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving: that if they were not able through want of education to read them, I should recommend their getting some person to repeat them till they had learnt them by heart. I should recommend them to commune with their own hearts in their chambers, and be still; that this internal devotion might be carried on during the labours of the field and at the coal pit, even when they had no opportunity of kneeling on their knees, and I could answer for it the Almighty would be better pleased with such secret communications of devotion than with any of the more ostentatious pretences to the operations of the spirit. This was the skeleton of the sermon I delivered. I have planted, but God will give the increase.

Friday, January 28.

This being a very fine day I walked with my sons as far as Falkland Knoll, beyond Wellow, taking the line of the hills across Brês Down beyond Woodborough. The sun being bright and warm, and my companions in high spirits, I do not know when I so much enjoyed a walk.

Saturday, February 5.

As Captain Scobel had written to me requesting I would go to Bath to-day to attend a meeting of the Commissioners of the Turnpike Trust, I induced Boodle to accompany me, and a very large number we found collected. Sir John Hippisley, as usual, was pushing for the chair, but as there was an almost universal call to Mr. Gore Langton to fill it he accordingly did. A great deal was said, but to no purpose; as the Trust was considerably in debt, nothing could be done towards new alterations and improvements till the debt was liquidated. I do not feel satisfied in giving up my time to such nonsense; a whole morning is lost in hearing a pack of interested attorneys, I fear to very little purpose as far as regards the benefit to the community; and that great orator, Sir John Hippisley, treated us with two or three long speeches about himself and his inn at Old Down, disclaiming all interested motives for what he did, at the same time shewing everyone present that this was his principal object. The fabulous account of the ostrich may apply to this worthy baronet, as he is always denominated. I wonder really that he can procure a hearing at these public meetings. A fall of snow took place during the time we were in the Guildhall. Boodle persuaded me to dine and spend the evening at Radstock.

Monday, February 7.

The day was wet and unpleasant. I was occupied in my study, the boys in packing up their things previously to going to Winchester. I gave Owen the tool chest I received from General Gore, and to Joseph my case of colours. I wish to afford them every facility in taking those simple amusements within their own power. I went downstairs to spend the last evening with them.

Sunday, February 20.

During dinner a girl came for some wine for Biven's wife, whom she said had been put to bed (she was only married a fortnight ago), and was very ill. I sent word I should give no wine unless it was ordered by the doctor, as I was sure it was very bad, for a lying-in woman especially. Having to call, I did so in the evening, and found her disposed to speak and, what is better, to think seriously on the state she is in. The poor creature has much to adduce in extenuation of her offences from the bad example continually before her eyes in the conduct of her profligate mother.

Tuesday, February 22.

I met with a singular circumstance, which would puzzle the learned Conclave of Cardinals and the Pope himself. The mother of the dumb girl, named Clark, was present while I was speaking to old Rodgers, and I enquired as to the report of her daughter's being with child by the dumb man. She said it was very true, and that the Overseer was about to take steps for sending her to Kilmersdon, which was her parish, but she feared it would cost them much to be separated, they were so attached to each other. Now the fact is they wished to be married two or three years ago, but I dissuaded the mother—who indeed was herself very averse from the match—from giving her consent. They continued the attachment, and the consequence is now become very visible. As they are now both of age, and the young man is able to procure his livelihood, on her removal to Kilmersdon, and *swearing* (if this can be done) to him as the father, I suppose the marriage will be concluded; but *how,* is to me a mystery. I am very glad I shall not have to officiate in the business. The Pope, in the plenitude of his power, would no doubt grant a dispensation with the usual forms, but I do not know how we are authorised to do so.

Tuesday, March 1.

In the evening I began to arrange my ideas on the Catholic claims, as I conceive it my duty, at the Meeting of the Clergy of the Deanery on the 7th, of which I have received notice from the Rural Dean, to express my sentiments on this head. I fear few will stand at the breach to oppose the dreaded attack with which we are menaced. What has been the Roman Catholic disposition in past times? In every respect intolerant against those who differed from them in sentiment; they have publicly declared by word as well as by deed a thorough dislike, nay more, an inveterate hatred, against the Protestants. That their disposition is the same as ever may be derived from the proceedings in Ireland at the present day. If the Almighty designs to punish this country in the midst of her apparent prosperity, He need only open the door to ——. I will not supply the blank.

Monday, March 21.

I was occupied in visiting the sick in Colliers Row. Mrs. Biven seems going very fast. This woman, now at the point of death, is the eldest daughter of Sarah Somer of Red Hill, and has been a prostitute from her earliest years; her mother brought her up in the vocation, as she has done all her daughters. I could not get anything satisfactory from the woman this morning respecting her thoughts of an hereafter; indeed, she complained of not being able to talk much, and did not join in the prayers as usual. Old Rodgers is much the same, very miserable, poor man; indeed, one can hardly wonder at it, his legs are now swollen as large as a child's body, he can put no covering over them but a petticoat. His daughter is so terrified at his menaces and violent exclamations that I fear she is of little service.

Sunday, March 27.

Mrs. Biven died yesterday.

Tuesday, March 29.

Some practical joker sent me yesterday an old rusty nail wrapped up in cotton and silver paper, with as many envelopes as a mummy, in order, I presume, to laugh at the Antiquary!

Thursday, March 31.

As Mrs. Jarrett had engaged me to dine at six o'clock, I went, and met Mr. Barter there. It was treacherous ground I stood upon. We had cards after tea; Barter played with me, and we lost. The Lady was too civil by half: she overdid the part. When I got home I thought how much happier I should have spent the evening in my quiet study, and lamented the sacrifice I had made and the crime I had fallen into of *suspicion*, when I am shortly to kneel down with those whom I think so severely of at the altar.

Friday, April 1.

This being Good Friday, I prepared a sermon on the Crucifixion.

Poor little Goold, the girl I have been so much pleased with as to her constant attendance at Church and desire to improve herself, is laid up with the smallpox. She has been vaccinated by Mr. Crang, but it could not have taken properly, as she is fuller with pustules than any person I ever saw, but so very patient. I promised to send her some children's books for her amusement, which I did on my return home.

Monday, April 4.

I called upon Bacon, Junior, at Meadyates, after breakfast, the man who has been so long ill with the liver complaint, in order to give him some of the Sacrament money, and in course of conversation asked him respecting old Mr. Coombes, of Meadyates, for whom both his father and himself have constantly worked as long as he dwelt there. I learnt some very interesting particulars about the rise of the Catholics in this immediate neighbourhood. It seems that the father of Coombes, the priest,[1] who lived at Meadyates and had there a chapel in his house, was a blacksmith of Camerton, who went by the name of "Doctor" Coombes, because he added tooth-drawing and inoculation to his manual exercises on the anvil; that at the latter part of his life Dr. Coombes kept a gallon house and sold beer. This personage, who was of great consequence in the Parish on account of his various and important vocations so much connected with the welfare of society, having a good stentorian voice for psalmody, was one of the principal singers in his day in Camerton Church; but, taking rather too much the lead, there was a violent schism among the singers, and as they were obstinate and Dr. Coombes was obstinate, the latter withdrew from their society, and declared with imprecations that he never would enter the Church again. In order to keep his vow, he became a Catholic. Had there been Methodists in his days he need not have gone quite so far to seek for a vehicle through which to convey his hostility to the Church; but, having taken this step, he persevered in it with all the ardour of heated iron, not suffering his zeal to cool till he had worked it into a more durable and efficient instrument to harm *poor Mother Church,* and that he did by sending his eldest son to be educated at the college at Douay. A nephew also, of the name of Hart, the son of a butcher, was not long after fitted out for the same destination. Coombes continued his education and took priest's orders, when he returned to his native country. Hart having conceived a dislike to that profession, being rather of a gay turn, ran away from Douay, and went to an apothecary, where he learnt the mysteries of the pestle and mortar. and set up afterwards for himself at Marksbury. When old Dr. Coombes, that is the blacksmith, tooth-drawer, inoculator, beer-seller, and Catholic priest-maker, died his son reigned in his stead at the house he had occupied at Meadyates, which was held upon lives, and became, on his father's death, his own. Coombes, the priest at Meadyates, had a chapel in his house where he used to officiate, and made two or three proselytes. Bacon and his son occasionally attended on a Sunday, but never became Catholics; but a woman of the name of Hannah Heal, now living, also the family of Mr. Day of Anglesbatch, father of Samuel Day who now rents the Camerton Home Farm, were constant in their attendance, Samuel officiating as a kind of clerk, that is, making all the responses for the Priest, in Latin.

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[1] William Coombes, 1744–1822, of Meadgate, near Bath, Grand Vicar of the Western District.

Having spent the greater part of the morning at Bacon's, who slowly walked backwards and forwards in the field near his house while he was relating this history of the rise and progress of Catholicism, I returned from Meadyates by Red Hill, where I saw Hannah Heal, who had been a convert from the Church and used to attend at Meadyates. She is a woman between 60 and 70, perfectly well remembers old Coombes, the blacksmith, when he sold beer, and lived as a servant with his son. She used to attend the chapel regularly. She says she never got much good from their doctrines, but they were kind to the poor—in fact, it was through self-interest she had joined them. She has for some years last past returned to the Church. Thus the sons of a blacksmith and a butcher, educated at Douay, formed the germ or nucleus from whence have sprung, first, a chapel in the priest's house at Camerton; secondly, a chapel and nunnery at Shepton;

thirdly, a chapel at Shortwood; fourthly, a monastery at Downside, where a number of young men are now educating for the priesthood.

Friday, May 6.

I understand Sir John Hippisley, the Somersetshire orator, is dead. Well, de mortuis nil nisi bonum; if I were asked to write his epitaph it should be as follows:

Hic saltem quiescit Sir John,
Dominus de Ston Easton.

Thursday, May 12.

I employed the interval till dinner time in reading Southey's "Book of the Church," which in my humble opinion might have been better handled. The more I read on this subject, the more I am convinced of the duplicity of the Catholics. Indeed, how can it be otherwise? They are educated in deceit from their childhood, and can have no open, manly sincerity about them, otherwise they would cease to be what they are. Let the Catholics only be emancipated in Ireland, the death blow is struck to the Constitution of England as it was established subsequently to the Revolution. Whoever peruses these remarks when the evil has taken place will perceive I am no false prophet.

Friday, July 1.

I got an affectionate letter from Owen at Winchester; he seems delighted in the prospect of being relieved from the impediment he has so long laboured under. I only hope our expectations will not be disappointed.

Sunday, July 3.

I examined some of the young people who were candidates for Confirmation before Church, and gave them tickets. There were twenty-two going from Camerton, and two of the colliers I sent back, not only on account of their ill behaviour, but gross ignorance, for, notwithstanding both have been educated in my Sunday School, they have entirely forgotten their Catechism and absolutely could not say the Lord's Prayer. When I expostulated with them, both laughed in my face, and I was obliged to beg them to leave the room, as I found it impossible to bring them to a state of their duty.

Tuesday, July 5.

My Mother and my daughter, Anna, arrived in the evening to tea. I was glad to find Anna looking better and stronger.

Wednesday, July 6.

Anna took a ride this morning on her sleek palfrey, and was delighted with it on account of its docility as well as beauty. I walked by her side, as it was the first time a lady had been on its back; but it did not seem the least frightened at the habit or difference of the saddle. The Boodles dined with us, and walked about the premises in the evening after tea.

Saturday, July 9.

I have been excessively idle for some time past. However, I finished a few of my sketches this morning for Anna to set, the two volumes of my Journals being complete, and I wish to get them bound out of hand.

Wednesday, October 26.

We had breakfasted before eight, when Owen and myself read the chapter for the day in the Greek Testament; he afterwards construed what he had prepared the evening before from the first Play of Sophocles, the Ajax. I was glad to find he had made such proficiency in the Greek at Winchester, so that, instead of thirty, I perceive he may get a hundred lines in Sophocles prepared every day, besides his Latin exercises.

Friday, October 28.

Poor Barter was summoned from the midst of us early this morning. The inflammation became so violent it could not be kept under, yet he suffered no great pain. Peace be with him! For five and twenty years I have found him at his post; now I shall look around, and he will be no more. He had hoped to live to witness the completion of the new Church at Timsbury, to which he has been so great a benefactor, but this was not permitted, and the succeeding Rector will have reason to be grateful for what he has done during his incumbency. It is some consolation to reflect he came in due time to the grave, having completed his seventy-seventh year, forty-two of which he was Rector of Timsbury.

Saturday, October 29.

I read the same portion of Greek as usual with Owen, who really seems to understand what he reads, and makes pertinent observations.

Sunday, November 6.

I preached in the morning and administered the Sacrament at Camerton. In the evening I preached at Timsbury in the schoolroom, which was crowded to excess so that I was obliged to get one of the windows open near me, as I was so oppressed by the heat. The people were very attentive, and many of them shed abundance of tears on calling to mind the kind Rector they had lost.

Monday, November 7.

I yearn for quiet, but there are duties I have to perform. I have not, however, neglected Owen, and we make such progress I have little doubt we shall finish the six Plays of Sophocles and all the Evangelists before he goes to *Oxford*.

Wednesday, November 10.

A most rainy day. After having read with Owen the 2nd St. John, I came upstairs to my accounts. I find I have spent since August on my journey to Edinburgh £136 5*s*. 0*d*., and the entrance of Joseph at Sandhurst £96, with what I paid Dr. Williams for the last half-year (at Winchester) £113, and Owen's entrance at Trinity £39 9*s*. 0*d*., and Anna's masters, upwards of £500. I have the consolation of knowing it was not on my own account, but for the benefit of my children. I will endeavour to live as economically as possible to meet future expenses, for I must reckon on this sum, £500 at least, for the education of my two sons and my daughter. How grateful ought I to be that I have it in my power to give them the best instruction the country can afford, and I only hope they will profit by it.

1826

Sunday, January 1, 1826.

I PREACHED the concluding sermon of my series on the Evidences of Christianity. After tea I continued in my study till prayer time, where I carefully revolved the principal occurrences of the year past, and literally communed with my own heart in my chamber and was still.

Monday, January 2.

Being engaged to spend the week at Southfield, I sent my sons to Bath. At two o'clock I left home in my car; just as I passed Newbury the horse came down, but without injury either to him or myself. I arrived at four o'clock, and walked for an hour with Mr. Peter Hoare before dinner.

Wednesday, January 4.

At one o'clock I left Southfield with Mr. Hoare for Stourhead; we preferred walking, and took the road beyond Nunney. We found Sir Richard remarkably well, and partook of a fine haunch of venison and some snipes; afterwards played two rubbers of whist.

Mr. Cassan[1] was in the house, but no other company. I did not get to bed till nearly twelve o'clock.

Thursday, January 5.

Sir Richard took me into his study to shew me some Roman pavements, painted by a schoolmaster self-taught. As the snow fell fast, and Mr. Peter Hoare had a large party to dinner, we left Stourhead after breakfast and arrived at Southfield a little after one. We found there Captain Seymour, grandson to Lord Francis, late Dean of Wells, who was uncle to the present Duke of Somerset. It is somewhat surprising that this gentleman retains a strong likeness to the Protector Somerset, whose portrait is accurately given in Sir Richard Hoare's "Wiltshire." I compared the print with his countenance and can testify to the fact, although ten generations have intervened. The three Mr. Knatchbulls, Mr. Paget, Mr. and Mrs. Hoblyn, and Mrs. Barrett were at dinner. The evening was very raw and uncomfortable for their return.

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[1] The Rev. Stephen Hyde Cassan, A.M., F.S.A., Vicar of Mere, Wilts, author of "Lives of the Bishops of Bath and Wells," Rivington, 1829.

Wednesday, January 11.

All idea of study is dissipated; the boys took their gun and their skaites immediately after our breakfast and went to the basin at Bengrove, but as the snow had fallen in the night were obliged to employ sweepers. I went to see whether it was hard enough to bear them with safety. They did not arrive at Camerton till nearly dinner time, having spent the morning in shooting. I regret the gun was purchased, as it has been a sad obstacle to reading; indeed, it seems now considered that nothing more is to be done in the way of study this vacation. When once the bow is unloosed it is difficult to new string it again.

Thursday, January 12.

Our guests, Mr. and Mrs. Hoare, arrived before five o'clock; Charles, the youngest son, accompanied them. Mr. Hoare walked the greater part of the way from Southfield, as the roads are quite hard with the frost.

Friday, January 13.

It was resolved after breakfast by Mr. Peter Hoare and myself to walk to Newton; in our route we visited Priston, where I pointed out the British Settlement on the side of Pentre Hill, also the stone coffin in Edgell's farm yard, part of which is converted into a trough for pigs. At Newton we procured admission to Mr. Gore Langton's gardens, in order to examine the tower of the old castle standing in a picturesque situation above the water.

We returned to Camerton—being directed by Mr. Hoare's watch, I thought we had plenty of time, but on our arrival at the Parsonage found we were ten minutes after five; the Knatchbulls, Hammond, and Boodles, with Mr. Gooch, had been there before the appointed hour, so that we had to dress in a hurry, and, being warm with my walk, I had reason to repent changing my linen without airing, as in the course of the evening I felt a headache coming on, and a pain in my side. However, I took but little wine, indeed within my usual allowance, and was in hopes I should have slept off the approaching attack, but in this I was disappointed.

Saturday, January 14.

My guests left me after breakfast. The boys made me feel very uncomfortable after the company was gone, and this added to the complaint which was rapidly approaching, namely, a violent inflammation at the side and chest; my head also suffered such acute pain, I was under the necessity of putting my feet in warm water and a blister on my side. I went to bed before dinner, and was in a violent fever the whole night.

Sunday, January 15.

I sent early to ask Mr. Gooch to assist me in the duty, as I was unable to leave my bed.

Monday, January 16.

The blister in part relieved my head, but I was unable to set up above three hours, when I made a list of the bills to be paid by Owen in Bath, and gave him drafts for them, also £50 to take to Oxford with a letter I wrote to Dr. Ingram. I had intended accompanying my son to Oxford, and from thence going to Town, but am prevented. However, in one respect it is for the best, as I could not have performed the journey and been absent a fortnight under £20. The children returned to my Mother's [Upland House] in the car before dinner, and I felt very low at their departure, as they have not been all that I could have wished of late; but it proceeds from thoughtlessness, I trust, not from any desire to make me uncomfortable.

Old Mrs. Jarrett, who seemed so well on Thursday when Anna and myself called, dropped down dead suddenly this morning as she was about to set down on her chair. Mr. Gooch called upon me towards the middle of the day to inform me of the event. I had no appetite for my meals; indeed I have taken nothing but tea since Friday.

Thursday, January 19.

I understand from my housekeeper, Mrs. Williams, there is to be a grand funeral for the old lady who died on Monday; if there be any satire on poor human nature it is this. Mrs. Jarrett of the Manor, who openly complained of the trouble occasioned by the good old woman after her first attack, and in her heart feels satisfied at the release, now is about to make this parade of sorrow; but so is the world. I am heartily sick of its deceptions; it is like the treacherous ice, glib and smooth on the surface. I cannot say but I feel more displeased with this unfortunate neighbour of mine. She has been sending me game and kind messages, but I cannot receive them as I would one kind word coming from a sincere heart. There is something in view, and time will unravel it.

Friday, January 20.

A letter came from the undertaker appointing eleven o'clock to-morrow for the interment of old Mrs. Jarrett in the vault in which Mrs. Stephens was buried; the pulpit, reading desk, and the Jarretts' pew are lined with black cloth, and the labourers working on Mrs. Jarrett's estate are to be put in mourning; all the farmers are also desired to attend—and all this to mourn for a perfect stranger to them, whose face perhaps they never saw. What a farce is all this! However, I determined if possible to persevere in my intention of attending the funeral.

Saturday, January 21.

A message came from Mrs. Jarrett saying it might possibly be twelve o'clock before the funeral would be ready. I waited till twelve, and then walked to the Manor House. Mr. John Jarrett was arrived from Hampshire; all the farmers were present, without even the exception of Day, who, being a Catholic, would not have accepted, I should have supposed, the invitation. I cannot get farmers to attend their Church, but it seems a more powerful interest than I possess can bring them there. Well, I can only lament the cause and deplore the effect.

There were six mutes; all the bearers, as well as the clerk, had mourning. It seems that the Carew vault is closed up, and that a small one was made when Mrs. Stephens's body was brought from Italy, near the door of the Carew chapel; the passage was so narrow that it was with great difficulty the coffin was lowered. Indeed, I was heartily glad when the ceremony was concluded, for of all the masquerading farces this is the worst. The undertaker came afterwards with Mrs. Jarrett's compliments to know what was my charge for the funeral. I said there was none on this account; if any was to be paid for opening the vault I would leave it to Mrs. Jarrett and should make no charge. However, after tea a note was brought, with her compliments and that of the family, enclosing a draft for ten guineas. So ended this exhibition. I hope I am not proud, but I feel it much more painful to receive from Mrs. Jarrett than to pay away much larger sums. The black cloth, I understand, is to be my perquisite in the Church, but I will appropriate it to clothing the children of the more tidy of my parishioners when they need it. I am not pleased with my feelings altogether just now. I fear indeed they are not what they ought to be; I will endeavour to correct them.

Sunday, January 22.

I preached in the morning on the text, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of the Lord." All the Jarrett family attended.

To-day's post brought me a letter from Owen, who has had an unpleasant *entrée* into Trinity, as his tutor did not properly introduce him. Poor Kett was much more attentive to Warren and myself when we entered, and invited some young men to meet us at dinner in his room, who introduced us properly to the society. Mr. Short, Owen's tutor, has rather played Bob Short on the present occasion.

Another letter came from Cassan, who is engaged in compiling the history of the Bishops of Winchester, to ask the etymology of the name of Wolvesey.

Tuesday, January 24.

I wrote to poor Owen yesterday, who seems to be uncomfortable at Oxford, and to Joseph, and also to Anna. Joseph has apologised for his behaviour, and I have forgiven him, and promised to see him at Bath before his return to Sandhurst.

Sunday, January 29.

I read prayers in the morning, and afterwards walked to call upon old Treble, who is much weaker than I have yet seen him. I promised to administer the Sacrament to him to-morrow. My old servant, Hester, followed me out of Church, and all the way to Radford, to entreat me to let her come again to work, and promised if I would she never would enter the house, but continue an outdoor servant. She says she has been so miserable since she went away that she is sure she shall die with grief if I do not let her come back again. I said I would consider about it before I gave an answer. I preached in the evening on the Gospel of the day, the Parable of the Sower. Mr. Gooch was the only person from the mansion house at Church, his lady being confined in child bed, and Mrs. Jarrett, he told me, was ill.

Monday, January 30.

I had intended going into Bath to see Joseph before his return to Sandhurst, but the day was so unpromising I had no heart to undertake the journey.

Wednesday, February 1.

By a letter from my Mother I find that Joseph left the York House (Bath) for Sandhurst by one of the stages, on which and in the interior were nine cadets. I hope he will arrive safe at his destination.

The same occupations as usual till bedtime. I do not know when I shall be able to settle to reading; my mind is quite unhinged; indeed, the misconduct of my housekeeper, Mrs. Williams, continues to add to the irritation of my nerves. She was so excessively insolent because Hester is permitted to return to work in the gardens that I was obliged to dismiss her, and give her a month's wages in order to get rid of her. The servants had one and all complained of her abusive language, but she had been careful not to employ it against myself till this evening, when she used the coarsest expressions, and even oaths, so that there is no choice left me. I gave her a draft on my banker before I went to bed, and took her receipt for the same, to which Betty was witness, and desired her to leave the premises early the next day, before I went to Bath. I am convinced my servants are in part influenced by the malignant neighbourhood against their master, and induced to forget the respect they ought to shew him. These are indeed evils. I could bear all outside my roof, that is, in the Parish and in the world, when my books are my companions and my friends within doors; but if I am unsettled and distorted in my own family and at my own fireside, it is indeed then a trial.

Friday, February 3.

There are better accounts from Owen, who is settled in his rooms.

Sunday, February 5.

I slept but badly, waking at intervals in sudden starts, shewing that my nerves are greatly shaken. I am determined, however, not to give way to it. The Church was pretty well attended. I told the children I should hear their Catechism this ensuing Lent in Church. I felt so exhausted after dinner, I fell asleep for upwards of an hour—an unusual thing for me.

Monday, February 6.

I wrote my Journal up to the present time.

1827

Monday, January 1, 1827.

I READ the official letter from Sandhurst respecting Joseph, which was by no means what I wished, and worried me much. I spoke to him after dinner on the subject, and, I am sorry to say, with less coolness than I ought to have done; reproof loses much of its effect when delivered hastily, but I fear no reproof will be of service. I found myself so unwell and so much affected, I went to bed before nine o'clock.

Tuesday, January 2.

I walked to Priston in order to christen a child and church the mother. Mr. Hammond, I think, is wrong in admitting this innovation. The Rubric mentions Sundays and Holydays for these ceremonies. We cannot be too exact now in keeping to the old regulations. After tea I was occupied till bedtime in settling my accounts. I find my sons and daughter have cost me this year nearly £500, and as much last year, which is more than my housekeeping and establishment amounts to. I have spent nothing extra on myself, if I except my journey to Town, which cost me £30, and was partly on business.

Wednesday, January 3.

I visited Charles Heal's widow, and found her rather better; but the Overseer, Hicks, will not allow her above eighteen pence a week, so that she is in absolute want of necessaries, whereas he allows that bad woman, Garratt's widow, who is married again, fourteen shillings a month. It is thus the parish pay is made an engine of mischief; the worthy and religious being set aside, and the bad are rewarded.

About the middle of the day my sons set off in the car for Southfield, and I on foot, as I preferred walking: we were to rendezvous at Boodle's. I thence proceeded to Kilmersdon, and across the fields to Mells. My sons overtook me in the car just beyond Babington, and on my asking them why they had been so tardy in their route from Radstock, I am sorry to say, replied in a manner very unbecoming them to utter or myself to hear. It was indeed a severe pang, but I have experienced so many of late it did not entirely overcome me.

I got to Mr. Hoare's at least two hours before dinner, and experienced a friendly reception; but my heart was very heavy. Well might I say with Shakespeare, "notwithstanding the wind was keen, it was not so keen as ingratitude." To be kicked and buffeted by my own offspring is indeed a trial, but God's will be done. I must be lowered every way, and I doubt not there is good reason for so doing.

Friday, January 5.

I went to bed before eleven, but not to sleep. I am sorely wounded in the tenderest point—my mind. It is a bad beginning for the New Year. I spoke to Mr. Hoare about Joseph, mentioning the unsatisfactory accounts I had received from Sandhurst, but not the insults I have so recently received. He advises me by all means to withdraw him from there.

Saturday, January 6.

The servant called me a little after six this morning. I had slept but little, and was perfectly prepared to leave my bed as soon as the candle came into my apartment. Having packed up my things, I went into the breakfast parlour and waited till my sons came downstairs, and one of the young men, to make breakfast. We left Southfield a little after eight.

Sunday, January 7.

I could not sleep as my head was racking with pain and very throbbing, insomuch that I felt it lift from the bolster at every pulsation. I left my room as soon as I heard the servants were up, and procured a light. On going into my study, I finished my sermon on the shipwreck of St. Paul, which was the Second Lesson for last Sunday.

My sons still are very far from contributing to my comfort. I had a long and calm conversation after tea, and advised them to go for a few days to Bath to their Grandmother's, as I derive no satisfaction from their society just now. I hope they will think better ere it be too late.

Monday, January 8.

My sons went to Bath in the middle of the day. I made up my Journals to the present time.

Tuesday, January 9.

A boy came to hire himself, but I did not approve of his appearance, and gave him a shilling to take his departure.

I opened, by mistake, a note which came with my letters from Bath, thinking it was a bill. I found it was addressed to my son Joseph, and giving the amount of the cost attending a gig broke, amounting to £12 10*s*. I must enquire into this. My own expenditure I am sure is sufficient, without these additional demands.

Friday, January 12.

I walked along the banks of the canal, and on my return met a man of the name of Bird, who belongs to Timsbury Parish. While I was talking to him, Day's brother, the farmer who lives at Anglesbatch, and to whom I believe I have never spoken, passed me, and looked so extremely impudent that the man Bird remarked he had never seen anyone look so insulting in his life; but he said, "Now don't ye, Sir, say anything to him!" I replied it was not my intention so to do. I said I could partly account for his looks—it was merely because I was a Protestant, and he was a Catholic; but it clearly shewed there was bad blood among them, and I sincerely hoped they would never have the power openly of shewing what they would do in my days. If it is thus one Catholic can act in setting the parishioners against their lawful clergyman, what are our legislators doing when they give them greater power?

My sons came home to dinner. All well at Bath, which is comfortable.

Wednesday, January 17.

No very inviting weather for a walk; however, I took one for the sake of exercise, with Joseph, and made a circuit along the canal to Dunkerton. I saw a large party skaiting, and supposed they were some of Mr. Bampfylde's[1] acquaintances or connections. I am rather surprised that this unprincipled fellow can have anyone of the grade of gentleman at his table; but this is among the fearful tokens of the times. The fearful end of the despicable and disreputable father of this man, Sir Charles Bampfylde, would have acted as a warning, one might have imagined, against a repetition of such things. To see the bastard son of such a father, having the same inclination and the same principles, setting as a magistrate to determine on the actions of his fellow creatures, and as a clergyman to preach against immorality and irreligion; this is indeed a melancholy token of the decadence of the times. Were I called upon for my opinion of the said Mr. Bampfylde, I should say I do not believe there is a more worthless fellow in the West of England. I record these things not out of enmity to Mr. Bampfylde, but as a record of the times, and records that may be depended on; for I never would defile my pages with these observations unless I could substantiate the truth of them. When there is such undue influence exercised that the bastard of a worthless, unprincipled man, who himself laughed at all things serious, and lost his life for his iniquity, should be provided for in the Church, notwithstanding he has openly participated in the libertinism of the father, what can be more inauspicious? Indeed, these are bad omens. The dissenters from the Church will blend the character of a Bampfylde with that of a Benson, and say if one churchman does such things, ergo, all must do so. These are fearful considerations: eheu ruit mole sua.

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[1] The Rev. C. F. Bampfylde, Rector of Dunkerton, 1820–1855 ("the Devil of Dunkerton").

Thursday, January 18.

Mr. Gunning, of Farmborough, called. He seems an open-hearted man, but I do not think exactly calculated for a clergyman, as he keeps his hounds, and, having no other pursuit, thinks more of a hare than he does of hunting out what may benefit his parishioners. I cannot suppose that a man who is engaged the whole of the morning in the field, and the evening at the table, can employ the talents he is obliged to employ if he undertakes the instruction of others.

Monday, January 22.

There was another marriage this morning. Indeed, the bride behaved so bad by laughing and other misconduct, I was obliged to say I would stop the ceremony; and the man who gave her away put on his hat in the midst of the Church. The clerk, White, asked whether they might ring. I said, Yes, a peal or two, as was customary at marriage; but not make the Church a drinking place, as they had done last Thursday.

Tuesday, January 23.

This day I have done nothing but read the newspaper. I went down from my study at nine, and took supper with my sons—a meal I never make when alone, and I believe by no means a wholesome one; but as Owen is to return to Oxford on Friday, I wish to spend part of my evening with him.

Wednesday, January 24.

I have sent some coal fossils to Mrs. Ingram, wife of the President of Trinity College, Oxford, as she has the power of shewing civilities to Owen if she chuses. Indeed, these little attentions are requisite in one's commerce with the world, since the quid pro quo is the order of the day.

Thursday, January 25.

I was up as soon as it was light, and we had breakfast a little after eight. The snow had fallen in the night; my sons, however, said they would walk into Bath to their Grandmother's, while Owen's luggage went by the cart. The Oxford coach, I believe, leaves the York

House at eight to-morrow. I have told Joseph either to come back to-morrow or stay with his Grandmother, as he or she best approves of. I cannot describe how very low in spirits I feel to-day, after taking leave of Owen. I have done everything for him; besides his £50 for the quarter, I have given him some wine to take with him, as I did last term, from my own cellar; also I have sent some fossils to Mrs. Ingram, and a letter to the Dr. speaking in his favour. But I do not feel satisfied, there is a weight hanging over me that I cannot account for. I pray God that what I feel to-day may not be an anticipation of evil.

Thursday, February 1.

I find that my worthless tenant, Lewis, is determined to do all he can, under the influence of Day, to annoy me.

I left my study after breakfast, with the intention of calling upon Hicks, the Overseer. In my way, within two hundred yards of my own house, I met Keel, my churchwarden, who immediately said, "Hello! I was going to call upon you, Mr. Skinner, for I insist upon knowing who told you what you told my wife yesterday, and frightened her out of her wits, namely, that I had said you had been at Camerton long enough, and that we would strip your gown from your shoulders?" I said I should not tell him who told me, but I firmly believed it was true since his subsequent conduct was so insolent. He replied, he would be d——d, but he would know! I said that his swearing to his clergyman did not give me a better opinion of his veracity, neither did the menacing attitude in which he put himself; if the farmers chose to insult me in the manner they did of late, that I could not stir from my house without experiencing some fresh aggravations, I could let the whole of my tythe and have nothing further to say to them. "Aye," said he, "you may take mine to-morrow." I said, very well, I would after Lady Day; but in the discharge of my duty at Church and when I was called upon to visit the sick I would ever do my duty, so that there should be no fault to find with me. "Aye," said he, "but we won't come to Church."

I did not find Hicks at home, but had some conversation with his wife, and said that I wished she would tell her husband to bring his books on Sunday to Church. As I returned home I begged Joseph to accompany me to Keel's, for I was determined, unless he made an apology for his behaviour, I would get a summons for his having sworn at me. The man was in a different temper, and very sorry for all he had said; he declared he would take his oath he never spoke a word against Mr. Skinner in his life, but always when people found fault with him took his part. I said I needed no such defenders; that if he acknowledged he was sorry for his insolence I would proceed no further at present, but warned him not to repeat it.

I had not returned home ten minutes before a paper was put into my hand from Lewis; it contained a bill amounting to upwards of seven pounds for the hire of a horse. The fact is, when he came to the farm I made him the offer of old Bess on the same terms that Nicholls had it, namely, that he was to use it for any little purposes about the farm, but not to hard work it, and if I wanted it occasionally to assist my horse I was to have it. I took no notice accordingly of the bill.

Sunday, February 4.

The Church was well attended, and I preached on the gospel. The people were attentive, but neither of the churchwardens was there. Hicks brought the Poor Book for my inspection, it being month Sunday. Afterwards, when passing by Keel's house on my way to Red Hill, I asked why he had not attended Church. He said first of all he had been feeding his beasts. I said that was no very proper apology for a Churchwarden to make, who was fineable for non-attendance. He said he knew his duty and what ought to be done, but he had not been well, and so staid away from Church. If he was well enough to feed his beasts he was well enough to come to Church, methinks. John Rossiter, who was standing before his door, I also spoke to, asking why he had not been in his place; he began making an oration, but, not wishing to be insulted, I walked on, and called upon Sarah Somer at Red Hill, near the Poor House. She has an inflammation on the chest, and seems in great fear of dying. I made some strong exhortations, and told her I could give no hopes that a mere faith could save her, in case she were called from this world to another; she must sincerely repent of her past sins, which had been many and grievous to my knowledge. This woman has been as bad as anyone in the Parish, and has brought up all her family in the same licentious course; but now she is in a most fearful state. The end will be the Methodists will immediately get round her, and if she says she has firm faith, they will give her a viaticum, and make this worst of sinners, for the edification of the parish, die a saint.

Monday, February 5.

I got a letter from Hammond, who says the booksellers in Town whom I commissioned him to speak to respecting the Etymologies will not do anything respecting the printing unless I indemnify them, in other words, pay the whole expense, as I did for the Wellow Pavement, and then give them twenty-five per cent. for the sale. I must therefore relinquish the idea of becoming a publisher of my works.

Monday, February 12.

I was an early riser, but found it required some difficulty to awaken Joseph. However, as we were to begin our studies this week I was obliged to get him up in good time, to prepare his lesson in the Greek Testament for the day, which we read after breakfast.

I got a letter from Samuel Skinner saying he had not yet been successful in procuring a cadetcy for Joseph, but would be unremitting in his endeavours; a second, from Owen, saying Dr. Ingram had invited him to dinner, and he had spent a pleasant day; and a third from Mr. Williams, our Rural Dean, saying that Friday was appointed for signing the petition against the Catholic claims, at Kilmersdon.

Tuesday, February 13.

I sent my son, Joseph, immediately after breakfast, with especial orders to find the keys I had left last week at one of the places, either Clifton or Bishops Stoke, as I was distressed beyond measures at their loss.

Wednesday, February 14.

Joseph was so fatigued with his thirty-mile ride yesterday, he did not come downstairs till nine o'clock. We then read our Greek Testament. I afterwards walked into the village, and called upon several people, Sarah Somer and David West among the invalids. The latter received several severe wounds from the bursting of a small cannon he fired shortly after the fifth of November, which entirely deprived him of an eye, and wounded one of his legs so severely I fear he never will recover the use of it. He was in the hospital for eleven weeks, and is lately returned. I persuaded him to learn netting, in case he should become a cripple, and have agreed to pay a man who lives near him to teach him how to set about a cabbage net, which must be his first essay.

Thursday, February 15.

As Joseph was to begin building a boat I sent for the old carpenter and drew out the proportions, and the keel was laid before dinner.

Friday, February 16.

After having read some verses in the Greek Testament I went to overlook the boat-building concern; the keel at first was made too heavy, and obliged to be planed thinner; I also ordered some hoops to be purchased to form the ribs, which are to be covered with oil cloth after the model of a former boat I built at Camerton several years ago. I then walked with Joseph to Radstock, having engaged to accompany Boodle to sign the Anti-Catholic Petition at Kilmersdon. There were only seven clergymen assembled; I signed the name of Mr.

Cookson, according to his request. I liked the tenor of the Petition, but it was hastily penned. At Boodle's we met Mr. Batchelor, a young clergyman who has taken the curacy of Babington. We sat down to cards after tea, and played three rubbers, all of which I won, which has never before I believe occurred to me; but whether I win or lose I hate card-playing most decidedly; it is a great loss of time, not to say worse of it.

Monday, February 19.

There is scarcely a day at Camerton that does not bring with it some annoyance. I had finished my reading with Joseph and gone to my study, wishing to set to reading, when Mrs. Williams came in a violent hurry into my room bringing a letter which she said a man had left and said it required no answer. On opening the cover I found it was a summons to attend the Court of Requests on Wednesday next to answer to the charge of Lewis for the hire of my own mare, which was given him with the express condition that when I wanted her for a little job at the Parsonage she was to be at my service; he moreover conditioned never to take her from the premises, but merely to consider her as liable to do his work on the farm for her keep. Two days I lost the week before last, and now I am to lose a third, and probably a fourth, to answer to this frivolous charge, which has not the least foundation to rest on.

Wednesday, February 21.

Having heard Joseph his Greek reading, we drove into Bath and went to the Court of Requests, my servant Heal, and Thomas the blacksmith having preceded us. When arrived at the sublime seat of judicature, the barrister who presides, Mr. Goodden, called out in a stentorian voice, "Mr. Skinner, you are come too late, we have settled the business as you did not appear to answer the charge." I replied that as I came several miles out of the country, I conceived a little licence ought to have been granted me, and other causes connected with Bath might have been entered into before mine came on: that I could not be very long after my time I was well assured. "Yes, Sir, the man has been gone a quarter of an hour," was the reply, "his charge for horse hire appeared to be very just and fair, and I see no reason why you should not settle it." I said there was the greatest reason in the world why I should not do so, since the man had not the slightest grounds to make any charge whatever, since I had given him the mare with the implied condition that, whenever I needed, I might have the use of her on my premises. This I could prove by the most undeniable testimony, and therefore requested I might be heard. Mr. Maule, to whom I had written to attend, then told me he had seen Lewis in the Court. He was accordingly called, and as soon as the cause which was then hearing was finished the man made his appearance, and was placed close to my side. He had behaved in so rascally a manner I could not really bear to look at him; but the Chairman, Mr. Goodden, desired him to shew the bill, and asked me to state my reasons for not settling it. I recapitulated what I had before stated, having taken the oath to speak the truth and nothing but the truth, etc. Maule and Thomas having given their testimony, the complaint was dismissed, Lewis having to pay the costs. But what most hurt me was the manner in which it was done. Mr. Goodden threw the bill to him, without any comment on the iniquity of his conduct and, indeed, his perjury, in swearing to a bill he knew to be false. I went from Maule's to my tailor's in Orange Grove to get a great coat I had ordered, and to chuse the cloth for some pantaloons.

Tuesday, February 27.

I read as usual with Joseph in the Greek Testament, and in Homer, after breakfast. We then worked at the boat and got all the ribs finished; it measures ten feet in length, and five in width at the broadest part, and now the framework is completed does not weigh above 50 lbs. I hope that when the whole is fitted for the water, it will not weigh above 200 lbs., as my intention is to keep it in the cart-house, as the colliers would destroy it in one week if it were left in the canal. My principal object in my present undertaking is, I wish to make my sons satisfied with the resources and amusements within their own power, that they may not feel the time hang heavy on their hands while they are with me, and be inclined to seek for society from home.

Thursday, March 1.

I was worried by the account I received of the death of one of the colliers of the name of Robert Payne. His candle went out in the pit last night, and in stepping forwards, thinking he was on solid ground, he fell down and was dashed to pieces. What renders his sudden summons more dreadful is the knowledge that he was very unfit to go hence; indeed, I well remember, when his first wife died there were some very awkward rumours afloat; she went well to bed, was heard to scream out in the night, and next morning was a corpse. The man has been a very bad fellow, and it is horrid to think of his exit.

There was a Vestry, and I attended it in order to speak to the Overseer about allowing West (the man who was so much injured by the bursting of a little cannon he fired before Christmas) a little money, as his wife had been with me to say they had none from the Parish, and only were supported by the Club. Hicks and the other farmers seemed to be more civilly inclined than heretofore, but they change like the weather, and there is no dependence to be placed in them.

Friday, March 2.

Old Walters will relate stories of the Camertonians, none of them to their honour. He says he believes God Almighty will send down His judgments upon them, they are so wicked, and nothing has power to check them; indeed, he told me it was worse at Radstock than it was at Camerton, since if a man purchases a piece of meat on Saturday at a kind of Market held there, he cannot put it out of his hand but it was immediately stolen.

Well may we exclaim, "O tempora, O mores!" I said that I felt most severely being placed among such a set of people where I could be of no good: that my eyes were now opened respecting many of their machinations against myself; I would forgive what was past, but if ever they attempted to play the same tricks, and I discovered them, I would most certainly make an exemplary punishment.

I walked to call on old Rossiter and his wife, but I do not think they are in any danger; indeed, the old man's pulse is quite tranquil. I read the prayers to him for the sick, and spoke on the situation he was in, as, independently of his illness, a man of his advanced years could not, in the course of things, expect to live much longer. During the time I was waiting downstairs, as the girl told me I could not go into the bedroom just then, I examined her in the Catechism, but found her very imperfect, and told her if she could say it next Sunday I would give her a shilling.

Sunday, March 4.

The corpse of the poor man Payne was brought into the Church in the middle of the Evening Service, and it was accompanied by such a crowd of Methodists the Church was absolutely not able to contain them, and they stood up in the aisles and at the door. There was a Churching and a Christening. Having observed that one of the Godmothers did not know how to make the responses as she ought to have done, I asked her, after the service was concluded, whether she was ever accustomed to come to Church. She replied, "No," with all the insolence she could assume. I then said, "How is it possible you can perform the vow and promise you have now made of seeing that your Godchild learns its duty, according to the appointment of the Church, if you never come to it yourself?" The woman turned upon me with a sneer, as much as to say there was no use in coming to Church, when she could procure instruction better suited to her taste elsewhere.

I am free to confess that Sunday, which used to be to me the most interesting day of the week, is now become the most irksome. I feel perfectly assured I am not of the least service to the people among whom I am placed, and I cannot wholly divest myself of my responsibility.

Monday, March 5.

While I was occupied with the boat builders in my barn after dinner, engaged in putting a sail to the boat, Harris passed by, with Mr. Dilly, the Butler of Mrs. Jarrett. Dilly and this underling seemed to have been drinking together, or I am much mistaken. Dilly said that the new farmer was come, having at length settled with Day; of one thing I am pretty certain, I cannot have a worse to deal with; some say the man (Day) is to reside with his brother at Anglesbatch, others that he is to be employed at Downside College as a bailiff.

Saturday, March 17.

I heard from Owen, who purposes returning in about ten days. A friend of his will be accompanying him to Camerton; I am glad, therefore, the boat will be completed for their amusement.

Monday, March 19.

I had engaged to dine with Mr. Fenwick at Elm, and to call on Mr. Doveton at Mells Rectory by the way. I therefore proceeded from thence to Elm, a little more than a mile distant, and I found that Mr. Fenwick did not dine till six o'clock. I was induced to join him, and a young gentleman staying with him in archery. After tea we had music, Mr. Fenwick being a good performer on the flute, his lady on the piano. Mrs. Fenwick sang two or three of Moore's melodies very beautifully, and seems to have naturally a fine voice. Mr. Fenwick accompanied her on the flute while she played on the piano.

Sunday, March 25.

There was no ringing for Church in the morning, and but few people attended prayers; I heard the girls their Catechism, and spoke to the Clerk about collecting a party of boys next Sunday; now there is no Sunday school, I suppose they have forgotten all they learnt. After Church I walked with Joseph into the village to call upon a woman in Whitebrooks Lane, who is not worse than when I last saw her, and I am inclined to think it is actual laziness which keeps her in bed. The house smelt so bad that Joseph was obliged to leave it, and I soon followed his example. I find that a kind of lodging-house for trampers is kept here.

After dinner we walked to Writhlington, and drank tea with Sir Charles Waller, as I had promised to lend him Isaac Barrow's works respecting the Pope's supremacy and the unity of the Church, when I met him on Monday at Mells, as he, being an Irishman, is inclined to favour the Catholics. It was dark ere we got home.

Monday, December 24.
Christmas Eve.

The Founder and Finisher of our Faith, Who suffered more than we can suffer, supported His trials without murmuring. Shall we, then, murmur, especially when the good things of life have been enjoyed so long by us? Whatever God has given, God has a right to take away. Thy will be done, O my God, in all things. These are my reflections preparatory to the Sacrament I am to administer and to receive. I can forgive, as I hope to be forgiven. The ringers came for the key of the Church to ring for Christmas evening, which I let them have. I was occupied in my study till prayer-time; I have not stirred out the whole day.

Tuesday, December 25.
Christmas Day.

I was awakened early by the ringing of the bells, and could not help thinking how much sound overpowers common sense in all we have to do in the present day. I lay awake last night thinking of these things, and soon after I had closed my eyes they were again opened by the loud peals these thoughtless people among whom I dwell chose to ring, as they suppose, in honour of the day. They had better retire within themselves, and commune with their hearts, and be still.

I walked to Church before service, and I understood from Mrs. Coombes that the large inn, York House (Bath), was burnt to the ground last night.

There was a wedding before Church. The service was well attended, indeed better than it usually is at Christmas. Mrs. Jarrett and the Miss Frys staid the Sacrament, as did my daughter, Anna, and about a dozen more women; but only two men, Smallcombe and Mrs. Jarrett's footman. After Church I spoke to the clerk, White, and said I had remarked he had not for three times staid the Sacrament, and wished to know why he had not done so. He replied he was not fit, for he could not get out of his mind the ideas he entertained of those who had had him turned out of his situation of bailiff. I said I had experienced far greater evils than those he complains of from the people around me, and yet I could forgive them—that I left them in the hands of God, and He would bring to pass His purposes in good time. And I further said if he, therefore, left the disposition of all his future prospects to the Almighty he could not feel malice and hatred and revenge, although some persons might have injured him in his worldly concerns. If he *did* he was very bad, and I should require that he overcame these evil feelings, and prepare himself to receive the Sacrament next time. I did not wish to force people to participate in this solemn ceremony of our religion, but still it was my duty to say, if they were not prepared to do so, they were not fit to participate in the hopes of eternal life: if they were not prepared to receive the Sacrament, they could not be prepared *to die*!

I walked from Church to call upon Balne, the constable, who excused himself from not having attended Church for these last five Sundays because he had so much to do about taking up bad people, and searching for stolen goods. The man was civil, but I know him perfectly well; he had his daughters and their husbands to dine with him. He promised faithfully I should have no more to complain of respecting the house kept by Mrs. Moon in his lane, as he would have an eye to it, and *present it,* if she continued to harbour improper persons.

I then went to old Widcombe's to ask why he did not attend his Church. On my arrival there I found young Goold, the brother of the lad who lived with me, and on my taxing him with his insolence when last we met, when he declared he would never come to Camerton Church because the Gospel was not preached there, he said it was because I found fault with him. I replied, with great justice, because he not only misbehaved by not standing up in the Church when the Psalms were read, but laughed loudly and in a manner to disturb the congregation. He said if he did laugh he was not the only one, but others set him on; that it was all spite, because his brother had left my service. The youth was excessively insolent, and of course I dropped the conversation since he told me he did not belong to my parish, that he never meant to come to my Church, and what business had I to talk to him. Old Widcombe strove to palliate what he said. How hard it is that I cannot go round my parish without being exposed to such insolence; but these are signs of the times!

Old Perfett, his wife and daughter, with Hester, dined with the servants.

I went into my study to write my Journal after tea, but returned to spend the evening with my son and daughter.

Wednesday, December 26.

Owen and Anna returned from their drive about four o'clock, having gone to call upon Captain Scobel, who asked Owen with Anna and myself to dine and go with his party to the ball at Old Down on Monday, he being one of the stewards. As I have promised my children to accompany them thither, it is arranged that we shall do it in this manner, and a carriage will be sent from the inn to take us to Captain Scobel's, and from thence to the ball.

As Charles Hoare was with us, I played at cards with the young people after tea.

Thursday, December 27.

I attended the Vestry, as notice had been given by Farmer Hicks the preceding Sunday. He only was present, and signed the books for a Rate and for the weekly parish expenditure. On leaving the Church I walked to Mrs. Jarrett's. She was gone out, but I saw Mr. Stephen and asked him to dine with us to meet Charles Hoare and young Newnham, whom my son, Owen, had asked to be of the party, which he promised to do. We dined at half-past five, and had music and singing afterwards, and the young people seemed much to enjoy themselves. Study seems to be out of the question just now.

Sunday, December 30.

I preached this morning on the text, "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, my sister, and my mother." I began by saying the selection from the Gospel expressed very fully the good fellowship which ought to subsist among all the followers of Christ, Who came into the world as at this time to recommend peace and goodwill. I asked their own consciences, how could man be entitled to the benefits of His coming for the express purpose of reconciling mankind to their Maker, if they would not be reconciled to each other, and united as it were in one family? I should esteem myself most happy to be able to hail among my parishioners a union of sentiment such as became members of Christ's family; the next step would be to exemplify their obedience to do the will of God by partaking of the Holy Communion, which was administered at stated times. I was much concerned to remark how much the receiving the sacred Communion of Christ's body and blood had been neglected. Those who called themselves Christians wilfully refused to obey one of the most solemn injunctions of their Master, Who, when He was betrayed, brake bread and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you."

As I returned from Church I met Goold's sister, who came to Church with Mrs. Keel. On my speaking to her she answered in a very pert and flippant manner, alluding to my having lectured her brother George for his impertinence, and respecting my bad opinion of her brother John. The girl seemed inclined to be full as pert as her brothers; therefore I left her. Surely they ought to have esteemed me as their benefactor, since I had done so much with their grandfather in order to induce him to assist them. The lads he has left £100 each, and to the girl, I hear, £300. I advised her to make a good use of the advantages she had received.

Monday, December 31.

As we are to dine at Captain Scobel's, and go to the Old Down ball to-night, I made up my Journals to the present time, and shall begin my next volume with the New Year, 1828.

1828—FIRST QUARTER

Tuesday, January 1, 1828.

THE Ball at Old Down was much crowded, the number of persons assembled amounting to upwards of 150. It is somewhat singular that I should date the beginning of the New Year from a ballroom; but such vagaries will happen in this changeful scene. We did not get home till four o'clock in the morning. That these things occur but seldom, it is well for us who have now attained a more advanced period of life, and though we mix with young people we do not feel the interests they do.

Notwithstanding we went so late to bed, we met at breakfast before ten. After tea I read for a couple of hours in my study, but felt so completely tired before nine o'clock I went to bed. It has rained incessantly the whole of the day.

Wednesday, January 2.

I left my bedroom at the usual hour, feeling perfectly refreshed by a good night's rest. There was the funeral of an infant a little after eleven. After the service was over, I called at Mrs. Jarrett's to enquire how her cold is, but learnt from the servant she had driven out. I met her afterwards in the village, and she joked me about the gaieties of the ball, and asked me whether I would dance with her the next time, merely because I had danced part of a country dance with Miss Newnham.

I might have said that I was glad my going to the ball afforded topic of amusing conversation respecting me, and diverted the vox populi into a more harmless direction. Heaven knows how little I am disposed to gaiety, and what a task it is to go into public. Perhaps it is sound policy now and then to go to a play or ball; if people will talk, the more harmless you can render their conversation the better.

Sunday, January 5.

I read the prayers as usual. Afterwards there was the christening of a child of Charles Cottle's; his brother stood Godfather, but the whole of the party came so late, and misbehaved themselves so much, I had a great mind to put down the book. After I had read the Belief, when none of the sponsors returned an answer, I addressed myself to Cottle and said, "Why did you not reply to what I just read? What do you say?" He hesitated some time, and at last said, *"I renounce them all."* I said, "Why? Do you not believe the Articles of the Creed?" I then told him what to answer. Indeed, indeed, these things ought not to be. One of the Godmothers seemed inclined to be very pert. I cannot speak to the people now without being exposed to their insolence.

In the evening there was a full congregation, but Mrs. Jarrett did not grace it by her presence. Her son, Mr. Stephen, was there in the morning.

I hope I shall soon settle again to business, as my Christmas holidays have been too extended. I am never so well as when in peace and quietness, with plain fare and regular hours.

I found on balancing my accounts that my expenditure exceeds my income nearly £300. This must be sunk in my capital. Had Joseph continued at Sandhurst, the outgoings would have been more considerable; Owen had to settle bills at Oxford, etc., etc., on leaving it. I cannot think my personal expenses can be retrenched, neither those of the household. I might lay down my carriage and horses, which would be a saving of £30 per annum, but I could not then move from place to place without post chaises.

Tuesday, January 8.

I awoke with a bad cough and hoarseness, and was engaged in my study after breakfast in reading and writing. My son and daughter were at Mr. Newnham's, at Chilcompton. About two o'clock a person brought me a note from Mr. Feare, the Bailiff of the Coal Works, saying his wife wished particularly to see me. She had been ill for some time, and I had heard she was better, but fearing the contrary I immediately went to the house. Mr. Feare seemed to be in great distress, and told me that his wife had been in strong convulsions, and had had a paralytic seizure, but was then perfectly sensible, but could not speak.

On going into her bedroom I found Mrs. Jarrett and several women assembled. I asked Mrs. Feare whether she knew me. She answered something which indicated she did. I asked whether she would wish me to read to her. She made the same kind of affirmative. I then read the Prayers appointed for the Visitation of the Sick. On taking leave of her I shook her hands, and said, "God bless you." She pressed mine in token that she knew me, and was thankful for my attention. Feare shewed me his son, a little lad of eight or nine years of age, who seems to be going fast into a decline. He told me he had now hopes of the boy's recovery, from a singular circumstance, which was, he had ruptured a blood-vessel while coughing, which had stopped the inflammation on the lungs. I fear this is but a fallacious hope, however; poor man! I did not hint it. Mrs. Jarrett has been most constant in her attention; she certainly has great merit in bestowing assistance, and I never see her in so amiable point of view as when thus engaged.

It is a dreadful day; the wind is cold and piercing from the east; the snow lies deep; Owen and Anna will have a bad journey from Chilcompton. I spent the evening in my study.

Thursday, January 10.

A child was brought to the Parsonage from Redhill to be named. The woman said it was likely to die, but I never saw a more healthy-looking babe. I desired her to tell the mother that she must bring it the Sunday after next, when it would be upwards of a month old, to be christened in the Church. I know the people are now getting into the way of getting their children named, and in order to avoid bringing godfathers and godmothers to Church. In fact we, *the Rectors,* are sine regimine, or authority; if a fellow is ignorant of the first principles of his religion, we must take him for a godfather or have none. I continued reading till ten o'clock, when I went to bed, leaving Owen to officiate for me downstairs, as I am still very hoarse, and my cough so troublesome.

Friday, January 11.

I slept badly, the frost was very severe, I did not get up to breakfast. Stephen Jarrett called and shewed me a list of coins which the University of Oxford wished him to procure for them. They are all of the scarcest kind. I gave him a silver Honorius, which was on the list.

Monday, January 14.

I sent a letter to go by the mail to Wells, containing a draft for £5 to be paid to Mr. H. P. Hope, the banker, for my subscription towards the Friendly Society Committee. I can ill afford it just now, but as it appears to be a general thing I must nolens volens do it. The Bishop gives £50, the two members £50 each, Mr. Gore Langton £25, Mr. Doveton £10, etc.

Wednesday, January 16.

It was so rapid a thaw that the whole of the valley was flooded, and the waters in places covered the road going to Radford. It gave me a very complete idea of what Camalodunum must have been in British times, when all the valleys were flooded by stopping back the brooks, and leaving only sufficient width to pass over the causeways. I walked to Cridlingcot to see after a child they pretended was so ill that they could not bring it to be named at the Parsonage, and I observed that it was merely a trick to avoid having godfathers and godmothers; that they pretend the infants are ill and like to die. This one indeed, a poor base-born child, I did not think would live, because the mother did not pay it proper attention. The mother said that her reason for not sending the child was because none of her neighbours would bring it to my Parsonage, and she was too weak to do so herself.

I therefore named the child, on the express condition of her having it baptised in the Church on Sunday.

Thursday, January 17.

A disagreeable, rainy day. Owen complained of a swelling of the glands, so that I sent for Mr. Crang. My own cold and cough continues to be very troublesome, but I shall not have it doctored. Mr. Crang was engaged to attend a lying-in woman, and could not come. In case of sudden and serious illness it would be an inconvenience to have the medical man living at a distance.

Friday, January 18.

Still an unpleasant day. I visited old Rossiter and his wife. They are much the same, and as Curtis says they may take anything to eat or drink they can fancy, as they had no fever, I sent them some oranges as the old man finds them so beneficial, and a bottle of white wine in the evening.

Saturday, January 19.

Still very unsettled weather; I never remember so much wet. My worthy parishioners begin to amuse themselves again; twice this week they have tied a tin pot to the tail of my little dog, merely to annoy and exasperate me. However, I must think as little as possible about them, since I have things of more consequence to attend to. Mr. Crang came to Owen, and ordered leeches to be applied to the part. I sent my servant, Heal, to Bath for the leeches, which were applied as ordered. I fear poor Owen will have a serious business of it, if the glands suppurate.

Tuesday, January 22.

This being a finer day, I was determined to try whether exercise might not be of service, and make me sleep better at night.

Wednesday, January 23.

I slept the better for my exercise of yesterday, and am therefore determined to persevere in it. Owen, I think, is in a very precarious state. He has not strength of constitution to support these violent remedies, nor a discharge, should this glandular swelling break. Anna's cough is better, and I hope she will soon be off the sick list. There was a wedding at eleven; and I walked towards the middle of the day to call on Heal's wife, and I read to her. She seems fast sinking. From thence I walked to Radford. In my way thither I saw old Sarah Purnell, and sat ten minutes in her cottage, which she tells me has been flooded this winter no less than thirteen times; that the water came once so high as the top of the grate, so as to extinguish the fire. I wonder she has been able to exist so long in such a place so near to the water, yet she tells me she is upwards of eighty-one years of age—a few months older than Mrs. Anne Stephens, with whom she lived as a servant upwards of fifty years.

Saturday, January 26.

I had but little sleep last night, my mind is so worried with Owen's illness, tythe business, and other things. The post brought me a note from my Mother, wishing me to bring Owen and Anna to her house that he may be placed under Mr. Norman. I wrote to say that Anna and Owen should come, if my Mother would send over a chaise on Monday, but I could not. Owen afterwards told me he had much rather continue at Camerton, and wrote a note to my Mother to this effect, which my servant, Heal, is to take to-morrow when he goes for some more leeches. Mr. Crang, I find, strives to prevent its coming to a head. I walked for an hour in the upper garden before dinner. I am by no means well, but medicine can do me no good. I went to bed before nine; but I heard all the clocks strike till five, when I dropped asleep.

Sunday, January 27.

I read prayers in the morning, and preached in the evening on the Ninth Commandment. The Church was more crowded than ever I have seen it since the summer, indeed, so much so, there was no room for some of the people, and I desired the clerk to shew them to my pew. When I returned home I took half a glass of wine, as I felt quite exhausted, but thankful I had been able to perform the service at all.

I am pretty well assured, from the signs of the times, and the indications of my δαίμων, that the miners are about to *spring the powder* the Guy Fauxes among them have laid, with what effect we shall see: finis coronat opus.

Owen has put on the leeches which were brought from Bath.

The post brought me a letter from Mrs. Campbell. Captain Campbell said he had the promise of a cadetcy from Sir Robert Farquhar, and that my son, Joseph, was the ninth on the list. He begged I would keep quiet, and be assured that his promise would be fulfilled.

Tuesday, January 29.

I called on old Rossiter and his aged spouse. They both still keep their bed.

Wednesday, January 30.

Owen and his brother went into Bath, as I wished to have Mr. Norman's opinion on his case.

Thursday, January 31.

I called with my daughter, Anna, on Mrs. Heal, who is declining rapidly, and I was surprised she was in want of the common necessaries, respecting linen, sheets, etc., which we sent down to her from the Parsonage. Owen and Joseph returned to dinner. Norman, I find, has but a bad opinion of the general state of Owen's health.

The post brought me a letter from my cousin, Samuel Skinner, saying that his friend's application for a cadetcy for Joseph has failed, and that he has heard nothing from Sir Robert Farquhar. Mr. Skinner further said he had met the Bishop of Bath and Wells in Town, who spoke most kindly of me, and said he wished it were in his power to make interest for Joseph.

Sunday, February 3.

I preached in the morning on the Tenth Commandment. Mrs. Jarrett was at Church part of the service, but left it before the sermon. I called on old Harris, who talks of going to Bath next Wednesday. I told him I thought, if he went such a distance, he might contrive to come to Church. He replied, Aye, he must go, then, to get a surcharge off from a dog! I then called on Balne, the constable, to tell him to do his duty, as there are some bad people harboured at Mrs. Moon's. The people were ringing so badly when I returned through the churchyard, and White was lounging about without attending to them, that I spoke to him; the man seemed disposed to be impudent, but did not proceed to extremities. I must get rid of him as soon as I can, but whom to procure in his place is the question, and I may take a worse.

Friday, February 8.

Mr. Crang says that he sees no material difference in Owen, and seems surprised that the rash continues still so troublesome.

I called on Mrs. Jarrett at the Manor House to thank her for the books she has lent Owen, and the rabbits she has sent. The lady was very gracious.

I have had to investigate a business respecting the girl who keeps the school for young children, and to whom I paid for twelve per week. Old Rossiter, when I called on him on Wednesday, told me that this girl, the daughter of Jeremiah Perfett, who had care of the children, was a very different person from what I conceived her to be; in fact, that she had been running after a fellow who came from Bristol, who was a married man; and he further said that, as soon as her Father was gone to the coal pits, she left her school and went after this fellow; that once she got up behind him on his horse and rode through the village, for which her Father had beaten her severely, and given her a black eye, which was the reason she had stayed away two Sundays from Church; that the daughter had told him, if he did that again she would go to Bath and get her living there as others do, upon the town. I asked Rossiter if he had received this intelligence from persons who could be depended on: that I knew the Parish was very prone to calumny.

I had myself a good opinion of the girl, as I always saw her attentive to her Church, and that she had borrowed some religious books to read with her Father.

Rossiter said that, unless he had been certain of the facts, he would not have mentioned them to me; that the girl went four or five times a day to the house where this man was lodging; that he had left his wife and child in Bristol, and had come to Camerton; that the girl did not know at first he was a married man, but, after she had been told of it, she continued her visits as usual.

I asked him who was the person she went after. His answer was, a shoemaker from Bristol; that he kept a disorderly house. And further that on Friday last there were four or five girls there, Biven's daughter, Tucker's, Hill's, Harding's, and this girl Perfett; that they made every kind of fun, pretending to preach a sermon in a tub, saying they would take a text, and that the words they uttered were beyond belief nasty and improper.

I felt very uncomfortable on hearing this, and, for my own satisfaction, was under the necessity of investigating it.

I found that the girl had been very faulty, and in consequence I determined to put an end to the school. I told my daughter to send for her account since Christmas, and I will allow the parents of the children, twelve in number, to send them elsewhere—I paying for their schooling till we have a proper place established in the village.

My servant Moses Heal's wife is very ill indeed, now having been brought to bed.

John Rossiter borrowed £15.

Saturday, February 9.

I expected John Rossiter to call, as he borrowed £15 of me yesterday. He has not brought the acknowledgment as he promised. After tea I had a summons from Heal to attend his wife, who they thought was dying. I read prayers to her, and asked whether she had any wish to receive the Sacrament to-morrow. She told her husband in a whisper she wished it very much, and I promised to visit her after Church.

Sunday, February 10.

I read prayers in the morning to a thin congregation. Afterwards I called on Mrs. Heal, and administered the Sacrament.

Monday, February 11.

As John Rossiter did not bring a note of hand for the £15 I lent him on the 8th, I sent for him this morning. On coming, he said he had not been able to procure a stamp. I said he must get one immediately, as I could not let him have the money without a proper acknowledgment, having been so often deceived and defrauded. Accordingly he brought it, but I was much displeased to find that, instead of having the loan for six weeks, he had inserted three months in the promissory note.

If this fellow plays me false I shall draw my purse-strings close, and only give small sums to those who immediately need, and *never lend* to any of them.

Tuesday, February 12.

I told my servant, Heal, as his wife was so ill, that he might continue with her, and I would not deduct his wages. Owen I hope is getting better.

Wednesday, February 13.

Mr. Boodle called about two o'clock to ask whether I meant to attend the meeting at Kilmersdon to-morrow in order to sign a petition against any further concessions to the Catholics. I have received a letter from the Rural Dean, Mr. Williams, on the matter, and meant to attend.

Heal's wife is dead.

Thursday, February 14.

It snowed so fast during the whole of the morning that I did not go to Kilmersdon. Indeed, it was impossible to ride. I sent Joseph to Radstock Rectory to tell Mr. Boodle, if he went, to affix my signature.

Sunday, February 17.

The Church was as much crowded during the prayers in the evening as it had been in the morning. I buried Heal's wife after the service of the Church was concluded, and baptised the child.

Saturday, February 23.

A man came after breakfast to request I would go to attend a poor woman residing in the new houses lately built in the hamlet of Cridlingcot. He told me the woman had been churched on Sunday last, and since her return had been quite raving, saying that, unless Mr. Skinner came to pray with her, she was sure her soul would be lost; that she was so violent several women were obliged to be in the house to hold her, and that she whooped and made such a noise you could hear her all over the place.

I went there about two o'clock. The poor creature seemed very well to know me, and listened attentively to what I said to her and declared she felt much more comfortable, and begged I would pray for her in Church, as she was sure I could keep the Evil One from destroying her poor soul.

On making further enquiries I am inclined to think the whole of this poor creature's malady proceeds from having caught cold after her confinement, as the house she lives in is newly built and is very damp. Finding that she required some medicine, and was fearful of employing an apothecary for fear of the expense, I promised to let her have some Scott's pills. The poor woman then asked me to name her child. I told her, if she said her prayers with sincerity to God, she would find herself quite well by the Sunday after next, when she might bring her child to the Church to be christened.

Joseph returned in good time for dinner, and has appointed Monday for Owen to go into Bath to see Mr. Norman at his house.

As I ordered some fish to be brought for Owen, and my Mother, not knowing this order, had sent some, my children had a pair of soles dressed for supper, which I partook of, and paid the forfeiture of my temerity by passing a sleepless night.

Sunday, February 24.

It was a fine, bright morning, which I am always happy to see on a Sunday. Mrs. Jarrett and the Miss Frys attended prayers in the morning, Mrs. Jarrett afterwards coming to pay a visit to Owen.

I then called on the old Rossiters. They both still keep their bed; but they seem able to eat and drink as usual, and indeed fare sumptuously every day, as Mrs. Jarrett supplies them with soup, rabbits, etc., and they generally have a bottle of Cape Madeira from me per week. But this I said nothing about to Mrs. Jarrett.

I preached in the evening upon the third clause I have divided the Lord's Prayer into, namely, "Give us this day our daily bread." The Church was quite full, and the people seemed attentive. There was a churching and christening after, of Farmer Kimberry's wife and child. As Mrs. Kimberry looked quite chilled as she drove in a covered cart from Lemansfield, and the evening was turned off quite cold, I offered her a glass of wine at the Parsonage, which she seemed thankful for.

Monday, February 25.

As the chaise from Bath to take Owen was ordered at eleven, and I thought it was a good opportunity for Anna to visit her Grandmother for a few days, they were all busily occupied in packing their things. I have promised to join the party the latter end of the week, but having young servants I do not like they should be left to their own machinations more than we can help.

Anna agreed with a person to take the washing for four pounds a quarter, instead of having it done at home, which will cut off one channel of village gossip—the main cause of unsettling one's household.

Tuesday, February 26.

Hiscox came to make the hedge round the Glebe Field. He began a history about Harris; he is a gossiping old fellow. I suppose Hiscox has had some quarrel with Harris, and therefore mentions all these circumstances to me. I told Hiscox I had been with the people of Camerton upwards of twenty-seven years, and could bear testimony, if I were called upon to do so, that they were as bad as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, about whom I had read in the lesson of last Sunday. If he only reflected upon what had occurred within this little place: what was become of all the farmers who had lived at Camerton when first I came there? All were come to a wretched end, or were reduced to poverty. I not only seemed as one who mocked to the people around me, but, as they could not bear reproof, or to have their conduct called in question, they leagued themselves together against me; but they never would succeed in driving me from my post; my eyes were opened, and one of these days they would find they were.

Mr. Williams, the Rural Dean, called to visit the Church.

Friday, February 29.

I drove into Bath to visit my Mother. I had forgotten it was Owen's twentieth birthday. My Mother had prepared a set-out on the occasion. After tea, we played at cards till bedtime.

Monday, March 3.

After I had finished my Journals I went to attend Mrs. Feare, having received a summons from her husband to administer the Sacrament to her. I found her perfectly sensible, but unable to speak; indeed she could scarcely swallow the small bit of bread I gave her. It was most distressing to see her.

I hear that John Rossiter is at his old tricks, and I may have some difficulty in receiving the £15 I lent him. I find in his note of hand, although on a stamp, he has omitted "value received," which I believe in a legal point of view will invalidate the note. It is very hard one cannot find one honest man. I drove to Mells to attend a clerical meeting, and arrived a little after two. We sat down fourteen to dinner, which was an uncomfortable one owing to there being only one waiter. After some rather desultory conversation one of the party, of the name of Bumstead, asked me what was the etymon of his name. I did not perceive it at the time, but have every reason to believe, on account of what afterwards occurred, that it was done purposely to put me on the subject of Etymology for the amusement of the company. The expense of the dinner was eight shillings, my horse and ostler one-and-sixpence. It was nearly ten o'clock when I arrived at my quiet parsonage. Anna did not much expect my return on account of the rain, which indeed wet me through. Having taken some warm tea, I went to bed a little after ten, not altogether pleased with myself or with my associates. If it were not for the sake of my family I would now follow the bent of my own inclinations, and devote the remainder of my life to a proper regulation of my thoughts, words, and actions, which can best be done in solitude; when I enter into society I can do neither.

I had a comfortable note from Owen, stating moreover he had received a letter from one of his Oxford friends, who would visit him at Camerton if I had no objection. I will put no obstacle in the way, but the repairs we are about to commence at the Parsonage will throw the house into disorder. I did not go down to prayers exactly at ten, neither have I done so lately, as Anna is engaged in teaching the servants to write and cypher, from nine o'clock till they come to prayers. I hope it will be of service, but I begin to have my doubts about teaching the lower orders beyond reading. I know much may be said on both sides of the question.

Sunday, March 9.

I read prayers in the morning, and afterwards visited the village as I am accustomed to do. I saw an ill-looking fellow begging at old Widcombe's door, and I told him he had no business to do so, or to be prowling about for no good purpose. I went to Balne, the constable, who lived only a little beyond: as I came into his house, he pretended to turn over his Bible. I said, "Mr. Balne, you told me once before, when I applied to you to apprehend a vagrant in the Parish, that I must see him begging myself, otherwise you could do nothing. I have just seen a man begging at old Widcombe's, and a bad-looking fellow he is; will you apprehend him?" He said it was not his business; why did I come bothering him, when he was setting down to read his Bible. I said, "Nonsense!" that I had frequently told him to do his duty in the office he held, and I must once for all tell him, unless he did so I would present him at the Sessions. "What do I care for that?" he replied; "you tried to do so once before, but who would listen to you? You are mad half your time, and do not know what you say or do." I then left this worthless fellow, and will make a complaint against him the first opportunity.

I preached in the evening on the concluding clause of the Lord's Prayer. The evening being fair, after dinner I walked with Anna as far as Radford, and met young Cottle on the way, who had been to Church, but never does so unless for some purpose not exactly connected with religion. He generally sits himself just in front of the pulpit, and makes some noises, either by coughing or hawking, in order to interrupt my discourse or withdraw my attention from it. When I spoke to him concerning the great impropriety, he seemed to be insolent, but afterwards apologised.

Saturday, March 15.

I prepared my sermon in the evening, having previously dismissed the mason and his boy, who have finished the walls for the flooring in the best parlour. I am inclined to think the mason's boy, son of Harris, late clerk, wrote some vile obscenity on my gates, which would have been a disgrace to the worst part of St.

Giles's. I desired my servant to wash it out before the people are about to-morrow.

Sunday, March 16.

A shop was broken into in the village, and money and goods to the amount of £20 taken away. I am convinced some of our own people were engaged. I was much worried by this evil race, and felt far otherwise than I should wish to do on this day, more especially appropriated to peace and tranquillity.

Tuesday, March 18.

The six larches I purchased of Mrs. Jarrett were brought by the timber waggon in the evening to my saw-pit. I cut down two fir trees in the upper walk, as I have not wood enough to go on. The six larches have not yet been valued. I am so fully occupied, I have scarcely time to eat my meals.

Thursday, March 20.

Owen writes that he is getting quite well and means to return home soon. I hope I shall get the upper room in a state to be useful before his friend pays his expected visit from Oxford.

Feare's wife is, poor creature, become quite blind, and it is impossible she can last long. Old Rossiter and his wife are as well as ever, but chuse to keep their bed for some reason I cannot divine.

Saturday, March 22.

It snowed hard this morning. Bacon, my tenant, has not gotten the security he promised for the payment of the Rent of the Glebe Fields he occupies; I had heard that Hicks would be his surety, and called upon him to know if it were true, and found it was not. After dinner I called upon Bacon, but as he was in bed and fast asleep, I told his wife that as I had heard of no security her husband could give me, I must look about for another tenant. The woman seemed inclined to be impudent: I believe she is a very hard-mouthed woman, as they term it, so I got out of the way.

Tuesday, March 25.

This being Quarter Day, I was obliged to go and regain possession of my Glebe. Immediately my servant, Heal, had finished his breakfast I took him into the nearer Glebe Fields, lately occupied by Lewis, and with the spade he carried I cut up a portion of the turf, and said: "I take possession of this my ground."

MEMORANDUM.—March 25, 1828

This being Lady Day, 1828, *I, John Skinner, went into the Glebe Fields lately occupied by John Lewis, who had left the same before his term expired, and took possession of the premises, by turning up some of the Pasture Ground with a spade, in the presence of my Servant, Moses Heal.*

JOHN SKINNER.

Witness: MOSES HEAL.

They told me one witness was sufficient; but perhaps there may be some quibble on this head, it being land.

I returned home a little after eleven, and went to the Vestry, and found that the accounts had been looked over by Feare. There were some poor people, two girls, orphans, and a boy nearly blind. I spoke in favour of their allowance continuing, and met with no opposition from the farmers.

Mr. Purnell came to the Vestry, and said he wanted to speak to me for a few minutes, and I walked with him to my house. He had something which he carried in a parcel, which I found to be two large *mince pies*! which he begged my daughter's acceptance of, saying they were the last remaining of his Christmas store; he also brought the £15, the half-year's composition for Woodborough, due this day.

Wednesday, March 26.

Mrs. Jarrett called at the Parsonage, and she said, respecting the larches I had gotten, that it was not worth while to talk about a few sticks.

Thursday, March 27.

I walked to Cridlingcot to call upon Adam Nash's wife, who is in a very precarious state of health. She met with a great alarm last night, as the outhouse caught fire and the roof was entirely consumed, and they were fearful of its catching the thatch of the dwelling. She was carried out of her bed to another house. I promised to administer the Sacrament to her to-morrow at eleven, and to send her up some port wine this evening.

On my return to the Parsonage I found old Walters had made another mistake, and I must not now leave the workmen even for an hour without setting them their portion to perform. We sent the wine and some of the Bouilli, etc., for Mrs. Nash's dinner. I got a note from Owen saying he meant to come home to-morrow by the mail. Mrs. Feare died in the morning. I paid for the schooling of one of the children at Cridlingcot, twenty-one weeks, and I promised to pay for another till my school is established, and its subordinate branches.

Moses Heal had the day off to move his goods into my Glebe House. I shall let him stay there rent free, on condition that Hester continues in the house; and I have promised to give him five pounds a year for attending to the Sunday School, and my daughter has promised to assist.

Squire Purnell sent for old Walters, the carpenter, to come to him at Woodborough to-morrow. It is very strange the said Justice knows neither Law nor Justice. At any rate he is ignorant of the golden rule to doing to others what he would wish to have done to himself.

Friday, March 28.

I went to administer the Sacrament to Mrs. Nash, at a little after eleven. During our conversation I said I perceived that a new Meeting House was about to be erected at the back of the premises, the foundations of which I had seen when I went to see the damage the fire had done. Mrs. Nash pretended to be ignorant that such a work was going on. Her aunt, Mrs. Lancashire, before she knelt down to receive the Sacrament with myself and Nash's wife, on my asking after her husband, said he was gone to Bath to speak to the Insurance Company respecting the fire, whereas I heard him talk and cough in the adjoining room when I was leaving the house. Does *Faith* account for such palpable lies? Adam Nash has for years been a preacher in the Methodist Society, and it is not improbable the Chapel now building will be partly under his direction. There is one Meeting House already licensed at Camerton: perhaps the Magistrates would not licence two in the same parish.

Owen arrived, and seems better in health. Mrs. Jarrett brought me the "Quarterly Review," and said she would leave directions for it to be sent to my house during the time she was abroad.

Sunday, March 30.

I walked to Mr. Feare's after breakfast to speak respecting the funeral of his wife, who is to be buried to-morrow. He wished me to be at the house at eleven to attend the corpse to the Church; although I have never done so since I have been at Camerton, and am not fond of masquerading, yet, as he seemed to wish me to do so, I promised I would.

Monday, March 31.

I have now finished the first quarter's Journal, and will, if possible, spare a few hours to tint the sketches I have taken, and then get the book bound.

Thursday, April 3.

THE same occupation as heretofore. Skuse, the farmer, is disposed to give trouble. Hicks, as I suspected, and Day are his supporters; but I have given the business up to my son, and will keep myself aloof and not expose myself to his insolence. Richard and Charles Hoare rode over from Southfield with an invitation for me to spend the ensuing week there, but I of course could not leave home.

Friday, April 4.

This being Good Friday, I preached in the morning, on the text, "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth." Very few were in Church, as the usual occupations of the week are carried on this day in the country; all the colliers work as usual, and so do the farmers. I found my carpenters and sawyers came to Church. As I do not make any deduction from my outdoor servants, I suppose they expect to be treated the same, but this I shall know to-morrow. I walked with my son and daughter and Mr. Flower to Priston after Church, to visit the Hammonds: he has been building, and was then indeed engaged with his workmen, which I was rather surprised at. As to the keeping of this solemn Feast, doctors differ. I may have my opinions on the subject, and my neighbour his; but really I think if we of the Church do not scruple to employ workmen, we cannot expect that our Churches will be attended. We returned to a five o'clock dinner.

Easter Sunday, April 6.

I preached in the morning on the Resurrection, and administered the Sacrament to sixteen Communicants, among which number was Feare the Bailiff, whom I have not seen receive it before; White, also the clerk, did so, as I had spoken to him on the subject before three times, and said I should entertain a very bad opinion of him if he did not attend this necessary duty. There were eight children christened in the evening. I do not like this custom of attending in crowds a ceremony which ought to be considered of more consequence than it generally is. One of the children they had named Ama; I suppose it was intended for Amy, but the woman who presented it twice repeated Ama. I learnt afterwards it was an illegitimate child, so its name has, I suppose, some reference to the cause of its birth—according to Pope, the Poet's definition of Love.

Monday, April 7.

There was a Vestry for the election of Churchwardens; as only Collins attended, besides Hicks and Skuse, it was determined they should continue in the office the ensuing year. Skuse told me he never meant to give me more trouble than he could help in setting out his tythe. I said if he continued in the office of Churchwarden I expected him to attend the Church constantly, in order to see that the people behaved themselves properly, and that the boys did not leave the Church in service time, and go into the churchyard to play. The man was civil, and said he would attend constantly. I believe John Rossiter expected I would have nominated him again; but, after the specimen he gave, I am afraid to trust him. I went to the Camerton Inn a little after eleven, and was engaged till half-past three in receiving the tythe. Most of the people attended. Twelve, besides my son, his friend, and myself, dined in the parlour. Every payer, however small his sum, had a piece of cold beef and a pint of beer in the kitchen. After the farmers began to smoke we left them, apparently well pleased with their fare. We got back about six, but all the workmen were gone. On looking over what had been done during my absence, I found but little to be pleased with: so true is the old adage, "When the cat's away, the mice go to play"; but they shall make up for lost time.

Old Walters was ill yesterday; I found the boy had let a piece of wood fall on his head, I hope not on purpose; this might have shaken the old man. The carpenter, Gay, who did not make his appearance yesterday, said he was ill and could not come. The workmen are plaguing and, if spoken to, insolent. I am almost weary of overlooking; if an Episcopus has to deal with such workmen as I have I do not envy him his office. By the way, I think the Test Act, when introduced into the House of Lords, will try what some of them are made of: in this liberal age a martyr's doublet is now reckoned very coarse clothing not fit for a gentleman.

I am sick of workmen, and sick of myself for letting them work upon me. My mind is quite unhinged. We have a continuation of heavy wet weather; this, together with the tormenting workmen, may make me see things in a gloomy point of view. I endeavoured to rouse myself, but cannot.

I visited Mrs. Heal's boy; he is no better, and takes so much laudanum to lull pain he cannot attend to what I say.

Tuesday, April 8.

I called the servants up after six. On going to the workmen, Walters told me that Mr. Purnell has sent to desire him to come to Woodborough, and that he had promised to do so. I felt very hurt at the old man's conduct, for he had told me he would not go anywhere till my work was finished. He is a double-faced old man, as I have proved; but Purnell shall not carry his point without difficulty.

I read to Walters what "Burn's Justice" says on a workman leaving his work without leave after he had undertaken it!

He said he did not wish to leave it; he had much rather stay with me.

I balanced my accounts. I find that according to the arrangement I have made, I shall have a clear income of £500 from the Living. At the high times it used to be £620; but I am satisfied, if Skuse does not plague me as his predecessor, Day, did.

Wednesday, April 9.

My son and his friend went into Bath to deposit the money in the bank, and pay some bills. They purpose driving to-morrow to Clifton, and do not return till Saturday—at least so I hear from Anna. I paid Owen his half-year's allowance. I hope he will not be too lavish, as he will have to pinch for it afterwards. I foresee that my expenses in the house will be beyond my calculation, which is always the case in building. I called on Mrs. Jarrett after breakfast in order to settle for the larch trees I have had, but the lady would not hear of my paying for them, as she said what I was doing would be such an improvement to the Parsonage, and hoped I should live many years to enjoy my present labours and expenses.

Kimberry, who has just taken Sheephouse Farm, came in the evening to say he wished to be married to-morrow at nine, or a little after: he had procured a licence.

Thursday, April 10.

I married the happy pair a little after ten, and said I hoped to see them at Church; they complained there were no seats; I said my pew would be large enough to hold them, and they might use it if they chose. But this was an excuse, as both Kimberry and his brother are Methodists. Well, be it so, the clergy at least may perform their mechanical part of the procession, that is, marry, baptise, and bury, but few will require of them the more important services which their residence in the Parish might enable them to perform to so much advantage. I went to see Hannah Heal's boy, who I fear is in a very bad way through some scrofulous humour which is fixed in his leg, and the discharge is so great I fear it will exhaust him: the poor woman will have a heavy loss, as he is a well-disposed boy. We have done a good deal of work to-day; indeed, I have kept the people well to it, not having left them but when the wedding took place, and when I visited the sick. Mrs. Anne Stephens called on my daughter; she is a very extraordinary woman for 80 years of age and upwards, having little or no ailments, and walking as upright as when I first knew her nearly thirty years ago. I got a little time in my study before prayers.

Tuesday, April 15.

Between ten and eleven Mr. Purnell called to me as I was standing in my garden, where he saw me as he passed by the rails. I went to him in the walk, and he said he had just been paying a visit to Mrs. Jarrett, and thought he would call upon me. He then began saying that he had looked in his lease and found it was worded as I said, that he was to pay £30 a year clear of all rates and taxes, etc., either parochial or parliamentary; this clause, he said, was merely introduced to save me from the Property Tax, in case such should have been laid by Parliament. I asked what the term Rate meant; whether it did not apply to the Parochial Rate, or Poor Rate, which was to be paid by him for the grounds he and his tenants held at Woodborough, as it used to be paid. That I had recently agreed with all the farmers, excepting Skuse, for their present composition, on condition that they paid my Poor Rates for the term of 14 years; that I should expect him in future to pay the Rates for Woodborough, as he used to do when our agreement was made. . . . He then began quibbling according to his usual custom. . . . I said in my dealings with him he was a shuffling fellow, and that he would not pay even his dues without he was compelled to do so. He said if I called him a shuffling fellow I was a rascal for doing so. I replied that if he gave himself a little consideration he would be convinced that he was a rascal for endeavouring to cheat me, instead of myself who was cheated by him, but I was determined I would oblige him to pay me the Rates in future. He then muttered something as he was walking away which I did not distinctly hear, but I called out aloud that I should not alter the opinion I had ever entertained of him, that he was a shuffling fellow. So much for this mock Magistrate, made out of a petty-fogging Attorney: how can we complain of our workmen's cheating us, when their superiors, as they are taught to think them, would do it tenfold? If ever there was a muck-worm, this is the creature; he was born, will die, and will rot without the solitary satisfaction of having done good to anyone who will lament his departure from the face of the earth.

Sunday, April 20.

I preached in the morning on the subject of Balaam and Balak: very few at Church on account of the rain; this prevented my walking between the services. There was a churching in the evening, and two burials. Some of the boys behaved very badly at the funerals by talking and laughing out loud, so I desired the clerk to take a stick and chastise them. This is a most untoward race, and it is impossible to deal with them.

Sunday, April 27.

I slept but little last night; my nerves are in a high state of irritability, which I endeavour to counteract by every means in my power. I rose a little after six and looked over my sermon on the first Article of the Creed, respecting the belief in a God. The day is much brighter, and the gloom of yesterday is in a measure dissipated. What poor creatures we are: in what does the boasted philosophy of man consist? the east wind or the heavy clouds collecting from the west may make a stoic shrink like a sensitive plant.

I walked to see the widow Heal's boy before morning prayers, and gave him something to buy oranges. The poor lad has the Evil dreadfully. Is not this the sin of the fathers descending upon the children? He has no less than four open wounds in his leg and thigh. I fear he will be a cripple, if he survives the great discharge. Old Rossiter and his wife will, I hear, be soon about again. I cannot guess what was their fancy to keep their bed so long, unless—but I will not surmise. I have not been there for several weeks, for I did not wish to encourage idleness.

Owen rode after to dine with the Freres. I thought he had better not have done so, having made a good dinner and taken a sufficient quantity of wine at home; but he chose to go. Alas! what authority has a Father now?

Tuesday, April 29.

The Camerton Parsonage will be improved by my exertions, and I hope will not need further repairs as long as I occupy it, therefore my time is not entirely thrown away; but if my mind is not able to support the daily annoyances I am exposed to, and sinks under them, what will the improvement of my residence avail me? . . . I procured three or four hours' reading in my study this morning. The carpenter, Gay, not here; the rest all in attendance; the slating of the roof is nearly finished. I hear Balne, the constable, is put out of his office, and it was high time that this should have been done. There is a pitched battle, I hear, on Clan Down, and people have been passing the Parsonage in carriages to be present at the brutal exhibition. If Purnell, the magistrate, were anything but an old woman, they would not have dared to come in this neighbourhood. I have heard them shouting several times; the whole collieries are put into excitement, and the pockets of their families picked, because we have no proper person to control the turbulence of the people.

Wednesday, April 30.

I got but little sleep, my nerves are so completely shaken; the screaming of Mrs. Jarrett's peacock, who roosts close to my garden, wakes me twenty times in the night. I went to the gardener and told him I would give him half-a-crown if he could contrive to make it change its place of abode, but not to mention anything to Mrs. Jarrett on the subject, as she would think it very strange that a bird like this should prevent my sleeping. If he be not removed, I mean the bird and its horrid notes, I shall remove to another dormitory; indeed, I have given instructions to Heal to finish the front bedroom as soon as possible, and I will occupy it when dry, without waiting for the painting. For this week I have not slept two hours together.

Saturday, May 3.

After I had read prayers to the servants I went to bed. I slept badly, and called the servants a little after six, as I waited to see whether they would get up without calling. All the old school of housewives is gone by; instead of punctuality and regularity, we have pertness and rascality. The plumber from Temple Cloud came to put the lead on the new slated roof, which is now complete. I was worried by one of my servants, who refused to go and take the milk tythe: there is not a day without something unpleasant.

Mrs. Jarrett called "pour prendre congé"; she says she leaves Camerton on Monday, and spends a week with her son in Hampshire before she sets off for the Continent. We may tell our English travellers, and this good lady in particular:

Coelum non animum mutant
qui trans mare currunt.
Domum Domum dulce domum.

Sunday, May 4.

I called upon Jacob Balne, who I understood had been very ill. He told me he had been obliged to relinquish his office of constable, but he did not value it a farthing; indeed, he had rather, he said, be without it. I am sure the public are much better circumstanced, be his successor whatever he may be.

Sunday, May 11.

When I awoke this morning, having passed a better night than I have done for some time past, I reflected that it was my birthday, and that 56 years of my mortal career were finished.

I walked in the village after morning service, and I preached in the evening: the Church quite crowded. There was a christening and two funerals after my dinner. After tea I walked with my children nearly as far as Splot, calling on Widow Heal's boy. We are to keep my birthday to-morrow at my Mother's; this is a family custom.

Monday, May 12.

I rose early as usual, but my early rising is of no avail, for the people did not come to work, neither was there anything done in consequence, till I drove Anna into Bath to my Mother's at one o'clock. We dined at four, and had a sumptuous entertainment in honour of my birthday and Joseph's. What is the meaning of eating enough to bring on a surfeit on a day when many happy and of course healthy returns are wished you? . . . After tea we drove home in time to save the light: Owen rode.

Tuesday, May 13.

I slept but badly in consequence of the feast I had had. I never could expect to live long if I were to eat a variety of viands, as I am sure to suffer from bile. Indeed one dish is quite sufficient, and that as plain as possible; but fish, flesh, fowl, and fripperies are enough to finish my days full trot.

Thursday, May 15.

I slept but little on account of the old nuisance, the screaming of the peacock. I rose a little after six. The mason told me he had been working all night in Radford coal-pit after he left me yesterday, and had not taken off his clothes or closed his eyes. This is rather different to the evil I complain of. He told me that his brother, who attends the engine, for one whole week only slept four hours, as he was engaged night and day for that period in the engine house. I hardly think this is true, and indeed, if it be, it argues great want of foresight and humanity in the masters of the works.

To-day's post brought me the following letter from Mr. Brougham:

"Hill Street, London.
"*April* 14, 1828.

"Revd. Sir,—

"I trust you will have the goodness to excuse the liberty which I take in requesting you to favour me with answers to the queries contained in the table subjoined, as I am desirous of knowing what change has taken place in the state of education in your parish within the last ten years. . . .

What is the number of Day Schools taught by men and not Endowed?

What number of Children attend them?

What number of Sunday Schools taught by women, and not Endowed?

What number of Children attend them?

Are the means of Education of the Poor sufficient?"

Friday, May 16.

I got but little sleep.

Respecting the Schools in my parish, that is as to the number of scholars: [there are]

At Mrs. Jarrett's School	61
Girls at Mrs. Seller's	20
Mrs. Moon	16
Mrs. Maggs (30 Boys, 20 Girls)	50
The Woman in Edgill's Building, Cridlingcot	7
Job Edwards	12
	166

I wrote the following letter to Mr. Brougham:

"Sir,—

"There are six day schools in this parish, not endowed; about 150 or 160 children attend them. Out of this number 61 girls are, free of expense, taught to read, write, and work by a Schoolmistress appointed by

Mrs. Jarrett, Lady of the Manor, for the purpose. About 50 boys and girls are taught by a woman of the name of Maggs; 20 children by a woman of the name of Seller; 12 or 14 by another female named Moon; 8 or 10 by another person, and nearly the same number by another female.

"N.B.—These four last schools are merely for small children, sent by their parents to learn their letters, at *2d.* a week each. The means for the education of the poor are not sufficient, there being great need for a regularly-established school for boys at this place; the population, owing to the collieries, amounting to upwards of a thousand. I have in consequence endeavoured—though without success—to raise sufficient funds for the building a school and residence for the master, and will readily pledge myself to pay £10 a year towards his salary, and will give the ground if the building can be effected.

"Having thus endeavoured, Sir, to satisfy your queries in these particulars, may I be permitted to propose some to yourself which I cannot perhaps expect you will answer, knowing how much your valuable time is occupied.

"Is not the Education of the Lower Classes intended to increase their comforts, and render them better members of Society?

"Can this object be obtained unless they are instructed in their duties towards God, and their duties towards Man?

"Should not all Schools therefore which are established under the sanction of Government, be obliged to instruct children in the principal obligations of the divine and moral law, as contained in the Ten Commandments? Indeed, the Sponsors for an Infant at the Font promise it shall learn the Creed and Ten Commandments, and whatever else is necessary for it to learn. But how seldom this is done. Should not all Schoolmasters, if licensed, whether (or not) a Churchman, be obliged to perform what the Sponsors have promised at Baptism?

"With every apology for having trespassed on your time,

"I am, Sir,
"Your very obedient and humble servant,
"JOHN SKINNER.

"CAMERTON PARSONAGE,
"*May* 16, 1828."

Sunday, May 18.

I preached in the morning my third sermon on the Creed; the people sufficiently numerous considering the rain. I called after Church on Mrs. Clark, a poor woman who is bedridden. She has been one of the Society of Ranters, but wished to see me: and on old Harris, who I think is not yet in a dying state, but he thinks he is, and is as much frightened as he was in the winter; but when the fear of death was passed he devoted himself to the world with the same anxiety as he was accustomed to do. I read the Prayers for the Visitation of the Sick to him. The world has been this man's idol, and it now vanishes like an evil genius, leaving the wretch desolate and almost despairing. He now says he has given up all thoughts of this world—according to the old rhyme—"When the Devil was sick," etc., etc.

I had a notice read in the Church, morning and evening, stating that my Sunday School would be re-established at the Glebe House, and requesting that parents would send their children in the course of the week to the Parsonage to have their names enrolled. I am anxious, now the measles are subsiding in the Parish, to get my number complete. Mr. Brougham, I suppose, will not reply to my queries; but if education of the lower orders without religion forms the basis of it, I shall not be disposed to patronise.

After Evening Service I visited Widow Heal's boy, who is getting about again. It rained incessantly the whole morning, and in the evening we had some severe thunder; my hall was flooded.

Two children lie dead in the Parish.

Thursday, May 22.

While writing in my study about nine o'clock this evening I heard the neighing of one of the horses in the grounds, and wished to send our boy, George, to take him to the stable. Knocking, as I am accustomed to do, over the kitchen for Betty to come up, but having knocked till I was tired, I went into the kitchen to enquire what was become of the two female servants. George said they had been gone to the orchard about three minutes. Distrusting this account, I waited a little downstairs, and then walked along the Church walk going to the village, where I met them coming from thence. On asking what induced them to act so directly contrary to my orders, which were positive not to leave the premises, or have any communication with the village, Betty replied that she had only been to Mrs. Dilly's, and those other houses on the hill, and had not been absent ten minutes: that the village was down where the Coal Pits were! I said that she knew I had given strict orders not to leave the house at all, that this was not the only time she had been in the village, and the last time she did so I told both her and Goold I would not keep them if they did so again: that it was disgraceful to see girls like street-walkers stealing out by twilight; one could have but a bad opinion of their modesty; indeed what I had overheard by chance the other day, when they were seen at full romp with the post-boy who drove my Mother over, was no good specimen of their behaviour, and as I could not depend upon them I begged they would take it as a warning that on that day month I would dismiss them my service. I said they had acted so very badly that I would not read prayers as I had purposed doing, and hoped they would endeavour to regain the favour of a greater Master than any on earth, namely, God.

N.B.—I went to bed before ten o'clock, very much worried by the bad conduct of this girl.

Tuesday, May 27.

Still tied to the stake! I find there is not sufficient flooring board, although I saw it with my own eyes cover the space of the whole room, and six of the boards over. There has been some thieving carried on, as I missed all the shelves of my bookcases from the best parlour, also some of the panels. I expostulated, but one and all denied any knowledge of it.

Thursday, May 29.

The masons, and my servant Heal, deserted to attend the Camerton Club. Mrs. William Skinner and Anna went to Bath in my phaeton. In their way through the plantations they dropped Owen's military cloak, and a poor man brought it me. As he was a stranger to the place and, I believe, much distressed, I rewarded him, so that it was altogether a lucky occurrence to him, and he was well repaid for his honesty. I had occasion to speak again to my servants, who I fear have improper acquaintance in the village, which has ever been the ruin of my domestics. Old Harris died last night.

Sunday, June 1.

This being Trinity Sunday I preached in the morning on the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit, shewing that as miracles had ceased no one could pretend to the extraordinary powers bestowed on the primitive Apostles without subjecting himself to be considered as an imposter by all reasonable men. I was rather induced to enlarge upon this subject just now, as I understand from the Bath papers that a number of my parishioners attended the Ranters' Camp Meeting on Coombe Down last Sunday: there were three waggons and their female preachers. The director of the Meeting thus addressed the motley mob: "You Camerton friends go to the left; you Frome friends you go to the right; you Coleford friends continue by the waggons." A most barbarous scene was then exhibited, men and women ranting and roaring and bellowing till they were black in the face, calling upon the Spirit to come down upon them—I presume in allusion to the descent of the Holy Spirit on the

Apostles, as recorded in the service of the day. Old Smallcombe, who staid to receive the Sacrament, on my asking whether he had been there? answered in the affirmative. On my expressing myself surprised that anyone who had the least sense should go such a distance to witness the exposure of folly, he replied, if I had heard them myself I should not have called it folly, since the Lord was indeed among them!

Monday, June 2.

Miss James, the daughter of the late Rector of Radstock, and her Aunt, with a gentleman named Briscoe, and two children came from Bath in a carriage. Miss James said she wished to see the house and premises, which she had not seen for many years. I was rather surprised at this visit, as I have kept up no kind of acquaintance with the family.

Thursday, June 5.

Old Harris was buried after dinner: several attended his inanimate corpse who never pay any attention to the soul which animates their own.

Sunday, June 8.

I told George, the servant boy, if he would assist at the Sunday School at the Glebe Farm I would give him sixpence a time extra. I have no confidence in this boy, yet it may teach him to employ his Sunday leisure better than he now does: he cannot employ it worse than in making acquaintance in the village.

I read prayers in the morning, and took my usual round with my son and daughter after the service, and saw Harris, the quondam Clerk, carrying a bottle of comfort to his Mother. I find there is a great feud between him and White, the latter having complained to me that the former would only let him have seven shillings for digging his father's grave, whereas he had paid him eight shillings when he, Harris, was Clerk, for one of his relatives. I said I thought he might require eight shillings, but I did not think he had a right to demand nine; that it would be much better to get a table of fees set up in the Church, according to the usual custom in the country, then everyone would know what he had to pay. I believe that these two worthies are fitly matched. I preached in the evening on the Resurrection, in continuation of my course of sermons on the Creed, which has been interrupted by Whit Sunday and Trinity Sunday. One of the people, a half-grown lad, laughed out loud frequently during my sermon. After it was concluded I spoke to him, and lamented that neither of the churchwardens was present to take a more serious notice of his great misconduct. The lad looked very insolent, and I have reason to think that it was he who destroyed one of my favourite flowers in the Church walk as he left the Church.

Monday, June 9.

I mentioned to my son, Owen, that I wished him to be very particular in the accounts he kept of Farmer Skuse's agistment stock, as I had seen some oxen which I thought he was fatting and not using as working beasts. He said, if I knew better than he did he would have nothing to do with the concern of taking my tythe for me, and I might do it myself. On my asking him this morning for the list which Skuse had sent in of his stock, he gave it me, and brought me all the papers he had in keeping respecting Skuse's tythe; he also gave me back again the map of the Parish, saying that he would have nothing further to do with the tythe concern, since he could not give satisfaction. I said, although his conduct formerly had been very reprehensible, I never could have expected such cool, premeditated ingratitude as this. If he would not assist me I must look about for some person as a bailiff, and if it cost me £50 a year there would be this less for my children.

Sunday, June 15.

I prepared my sermon by making a new introduction to an old discourse, on a text taken from the Epistle for the day.

I endeavoured to point out that a true Faith and

Belief in Christ consisted in practice, not in words: that it was to be shewn by active duties towards our fellow creatures, not by mere expression of feeling: that Christ had said over and over again that this was the sum and scope of His religion. In these days those who separated from the Church had run into strange fancies, imagining they were to be heard for their much speaking and substituting sound for sense: it was my duty to shew what was the meaning of the Sacred Writings, and I would do so in a rational manner: that as I had been appointed their pastor, it was my bounden duty to endeavour to retain my flock in their pastures, and not suffer them, unless they were determined to break bounds, to wander into other grounds.

The people were attentive, and there was no misbehaviour such as I had occasion to notice last Sunday. Hicks the Churchwarden attended, Jacob Balne the ex-constable also was in his place. I read notices both morning and evening respecting the Confirmation, which is to take place on Monday the 14th of next month, desiring that all candidates of above the age of fourteen years will send in their names the ensuing week, and attend at the Parsonage next Sunday at 10 o'clock, that I may converse with them on the subject.

Monday, June 16.

It rained hard almost all night. To my state of mind it seemed fitting: I expect moreover the storm which has been so long collecting will burst over my head, but I do not think it will beat me to the earth! My greatest affliction is what springs from my own household. I could better support all the storms which spring from without than that which agitates me from within. I am completely weaned from the world and all its attractions, for now I confess it has none for me, and if it be the will of God to call me hence I can depart without a murmur or a sigh. . . . I feel an unusual depression of spirits this day; the violent thunder we have had, and heavy atmosphere may in part account for it. We dined at one o'clock, and Owen, I understand, went out to fish afterwards. He consults only his own amusements, and will not stir a finger to assist his Father. I feel his ingratitude more deeply than any wound the world has ever inflicted. . . . All the clover now cut must be spoilt, as the rain falls incessantly. How fortunate may I esteem myself in having had such fine weather last week. . . . I just perceive my son coming home from his fishing—I suppose completely wet; we have for some time done tea. I feel so unwell and unhinged in every respect that I shall desire Anna to read prayers to the servants, and go to bed, as my pillow now is my best comforter.

Tuesday, June 17.

After a restless and feverish night I rose at seven, and was occupied in my study for a couple of hours after breakfast. . . . I spoke to Owen, whose conduct to me since my return home has been very insulting, as far as speaking and rude behaviour will go, and I had determined not to say anything to him; but, as my peace of mind is at stake, and it must be to me a source of continual disquiet to see my son discontented, sulky, and sullen under my roof, I went to him and asked what was the cause of his behaviour, and why he chose to insult his Father day after day by his misconduct? I had done everything for him, and when I expected he would be of some service in assisting me in taking the tythe he had refused. I had reason, therefore, to be displeased, not he; that if he felt uncomfortable at home he had better tell me so at once, and what he designed to do with himself, as he did not appear to study for the law with any energy—it was but idling away his time to pretend to that profession. He said he had given up all thoughts of following it, and had other plans. I asked what. He said he should not tell me. I replied that I did not merit this conduct; I had ever assisted him heretofore, and was prepared to mention now I would assist him still if the plans were rational; but I would give up no money to be idled away. He said that he would not tell me his plans, and if I did not let him have some money to forward them, he would take up some on his reversion of what Mrs. Manningham had left him: he knew he could do this. Seeing that it was useless to speak to him any longer, I left him. On quitting his room he followed me, and banged and bolted the door against me.

I drove to Bath, taking young Frere with me as far as my Mother's, where I put him down. I mentioned to my Mother the great uneasiness I had experienced on account of Owen's behaviour, and she wrote him a letter on the subject.

Saturday, June 21.

I received a note from Owen by the post, wherein he said he was sorry for his behaviour, but declared he did not mean to study for the law, wishing to get into the army, and, if he could not procure a commission, should like to go out to India as an adventurer. This is entirely out of the question. If he can point out any line in which I can assist him, with a prospect of benefit to himself, I will do it, but not throw away money, and have him return a pauper on my hands.

Sunday, June 22.

I heard some of the candidates for confirmation before Church, in number fourteen. After the service I walked to Meadyeates with my son and daughter to speak to the schoolmaster, Maggs, and the teacher of the Methodist school, to ask whether there were any young people under their care who would wish to be confirmed. . . .

Monday, June 23.

Owen and his sister went to call on Mr. Stephen Jarrett and Mrs. Anne Stephens before dinner; the former made an engagement to take a drive with Stephen Jarrett after our dinner. I thought he might have rather assisted me in the tything business, but he has made up his mind to consider solely himself. On my speaking to him I had a repetition of the same unfeeling insults I have of late so much been accustomed to, and, when he was gone with Stephen Jarrett, I went into my study and wrote the following note to him, meaning to leave it, as I had ordered my carriage to drive to my Mother's, finding it impossible to live longer in the same house with so undutiful and ungrateful a son.

Copy of a note to Owen Skinner, dated June 23, 1828:

After the insults which you have this day coolly and premeditatedly offered to your Father—a Father who has overlooked and forgiven similar insults several times, it is incumbent on that Father to tell his son that his own peace of mind requires that his feelings should not again be put to the trial of fresh insults. He is therefore come to the determination of again quitting his own house; but as he cannot do so for any long period without great loss—there being no one who will superintend the tything and farming concerns in his absence—he has to request, *nay more, to command his son to leave him.* This Father, however outraged, will still consider the interests of his son as far as the purchase of a commission will go; he moreover will request his Grandmother to receive him for a time till steps can be taken to accomplish this end, and however repugnant it may be to his Father's better judgment. But it is decided by his Father never again to be exposed to similar insults from a son who eats of his bread and drinks of his cup, and yet abuses the benefactor who has sustained him from his youth up until now, and was his best and only true friend.

On going down I found Owen had returned from his drive, and gave him the note. I said it was the last time we should meet, as I could not live longer with him; his behaviour was so contrary to everything that it ought to be that I was going to my Mother's to request she would receive him for a time till something could be done, and asked whether he had any objection to go to her house for a time. He said, "Certainly not." I then proceeded to Bath, taking my servant with me to return with the carriage to Camerton. I wrote by him to Anna, saying a chaise would be at Camerton at ten o'clock the following morning to convey Owen and his things to Bath, but that I should not see Owen any more. A little after eight I went to bed, completely worried.

Wednesday, June 25.

After dinner I went into Longlands field, where the remainder of the hay is tything, having been summoned thither by the misconduct of the farmer, who will not suffer my men to remove my tythe cocks till his own is carried. He was very insolent because I happened to make use of the word "fellow" when speaking of him, which word he could not comprehend. But I think it cannot be law to prevent my tythe being carried from his field till his own is disposed of, since directly the bough is placed on the tenth cock with the assent of the farmer it becomes mine, and if I cannot remove it without his permission there is no great use in calling it mine.

Thursday, June 26.

I was busily occupied the whole day in my tything concerns, and went round the farm with Joseph to estimate the several crops on the ground. There are 75 acres of clover, the same number of natural grass to be mowed, 60 of wheat, 45 of barley, 14 of beans, and 6½ of oats. Skuse has taken the tything into his own hands, and has positively refused to let my man tythe, or to take away the cocks when tythed for me unless his own portion be first removed. I wrote requesting an appointment with Mr. Pratt, the Bishop's tythe lawyer at Wells, whom I must see in order to get a citation for Skuse to the Court, as we cannot go on as we are now doing. He has sheared his sheep without giving me notice, and retains the wool; he has not given me any tythe of pigs or calves, and will not come to any settlement for his agistment.

Saturday, June 28.

On walking into the field after dinner I found my men at a stop, there being six rows fit for tything, and Skuse would not tythe it because his men were unloading, and there were only a few cocks—not a quarter of a load—for them to carry. As I had received notice for tything in the morning, I desired Heal to take some boughs and tythe the six rows in order that he might take another load to the mow. Skuse came running like a wild bull, and bellowing as such, snatched the boughs out of my servant's hands, and said no one should tythe but himself. I desired Heal to persevere, and get some other boughs; I also told George to leave the cart, and witness what was going forwards. Skuse collared Heal and pushed him beyond the first row of cocks, and his son took George by force in his arms and, notwithstanding his struggling, threw him also beyond this barrier, which he said he had a right to keep, and neither my people nor myself had a right to be there. Seeing the party ripe for an assault, I desired my men to leave the field with the cart, and told my son, loud enough for Skuse to hear, I would not take tythe so put out, and have my men assaulted for doing their duty.

I would not let my cart go into the field to take up the tythe, but drew out the Memorial for the perusal of Mr. Pratt on Monday, or one of the Proctors of the Wells Court, against William Skuse, Farmer, for improper setting out of, and subtraction of Tythe; June 28, 1828.

The cart-horse I bought this morning, for which I gave £18, promises to turn out well.

Sunday, June 29.

I preached in the morning on the subject of Baptism, as connected with Confirmation, having previously given tickets to nineteen young people whose examination I approved.

Monday, June 30.

I drove to Wells, and immediately called on the Bishop,[1] who was very kind and polite, as is his usual custom, and asked me to dine with him, but said he must leave the table soon as he was engaged in writing his Charge, having to go to Bath to-morrow.

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[1] The Right Reverend George Henry Law, D.D., F.R.S., F.S.A., Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1824–1845.

Not finding Mr. Pratt at Wells, I drove to Glastonbury, where I dined with him at his brother's house, and gave him all the necessary documents respecting Farmer Skuse.

He says there can be no doubt but he has done very wrong in adopting the mode of tything he had done, and that the Court would decree double damages for the clover.

1828—THIRD QUARTER

Tuesday, July 1, 1828.

ON going to the Glebe I found nine haymakers, including Moses Heal, White, and George, in the four-acre field which was cut, part of it on Saturday, and five mowers in the twelve-acre field. There ought to have been the whole of that ground down, as it is only about ten acres, although computed at twelve, and nearly three-quarters of an acre is in barley. I spoke to the haymakers about being idle; they said they only stopped to take a lunch at eleven, and had not been idle. White, who was the spokesman and had brought a clan of his relations into the field, said that they had been working very hard. I said I could not perceive it by what had been done in the field.

I went up into the Glebe field after tea. The haymakers had complained of the beer which was brewed by Feare, and some of which I drank at dinner and thought it very good. The mowers said they thought it excellent. I told them if they were dissatisfied I would not employ them. I went to White, who is a sly fellow and the secret instigator of this mutiny, and paid him off.

A little after all the women went, and were paid by my daughter at the Parsonage. As it seemed to threaten rain, and the grass was left about in the four-acre field, I desired the mowers to put it up in great cock. Moses Heal was inclined to be insolent when I spoke to him about permitting the haymakers to leave the field till the hay was put in cock, and said, instead of the beer being bad, it is actually too strong to be drunk in great quantities.

On my return home I spoke to Betty and her fellow servant, whom I had seen standing before the door to gape at everyone passing by, saying it was a discredit to any modest woman to do so. Betty then said that the month's warning I had given them was more than up, and that she and Goold wished to leave me to-morrow. I told them they certainly should do so.

I see that White and his people have been with them, and absolutely made common cause; and they think to distress me by leaving my work just now. I will not, however, let them feel they are of any consequence, and shall send in Joseph early to get some of the tradesmen I deal with in Bath only to recommend a couple of servants for a time: indeed this bellum servile is what I am not fit for.

I was obliged to go to Feare, the bailiff, late in the evening to get a promise of some more haymakers in the room of those I have dismissed.

Wednesday, July 2.

I rose before six, and wrote before breakfast. Joseph and young Upham, who dined yesterday with us and slept at the Parsonage, drove into Bath immediately after breakfast. I sent a note to Captain Scobel, excusing myself from dining with him, stating I had to change my servants, and could not leave the house. My mind is in a constant state of irritation, and that is what my bad tormentors wish it to be.

I got six more haymakers into the field, who worked very well. On returning home I found the two female servants, notwithstanding my daughter Anna told them to stay till six o'clock, went at four, leaving us without a person to answer the bell. As the parents of both girls live in the Parish, they might have deferred going an hour or two later. The gross ingratitude of the elder girl, Betty, is beyond all parallel. I took her absolutely a pauper, because I thought she had shewn a kindness of disposition in attending to a sick family. I clothed her, and gave her wages, beginning at £5 and ending at £10 per annum, so that she has saved £14 and has a large stock of clothes; but she chose to leave me at a time when she thought I should be distressed just in the midst of my haymaking.

But, alas! It is not this ingratitude which affects me. No; it is that of my children! Joseph, I hope, will not follow his brother Owen's example. Again I have forgiven what has passed.

Old Walters came in the evening for his tools, as he left my work some time since to go to Squire Purnell's, and I told him I could not again employ him. Mr. Purnell, as a magistrate, ought to know better than to send for workmen when engaged in the employment of another.

Thursday, July 3.

A woman Joseph had engaged at Bath came after breakfast by the coach; but a second is not arrived. After I had left the hayfield the men, I understand, grumbled for not having as much beer as they chose to drink. I therefore made these regulations: That the men who mow are to have a gallon an acre besides money and their victuals. The women, three pints and a shilling apiece. I desired the beer to be taken up to the Glebe Farm House, and Heal to see that the people have this allowance. It is most painful to have dealings with the brutified vulgar.

Now I have laid down the allowance, those who do not chuse to abide by it have orders to leave the ground.

Friday, July 4.

Still the same unpleasant, unprofitable occupations! I was the whole of the morning overlooking the people. Joseph was despatched after breakfast to Bath, in order to enquire after the servant who had promised to come over to officiate as cook. Young Frere came to dine.

I much wish young people could possibly feel when their company is considered as intrusive! But that never enters into the catalogue of modern cogitations. I spent the whole of the evening in the hayfield. Joseph returned before tea, and he and his friend, young Frere, went out shooting swallows.

I was so much hurt with this want of all propriety, in following amusement when actual assistance was requisite, that I retired to my room before the tray was brought in for supper, in order to shew what I felt.

Saturday, July 5.

I understood at breakfast that the servants made heavy complaints of their beds and accommodations, telling Anna it was like a farmhouse more than a gentleman's, or words to this effect, and after breakfast they said they should not stay beyond the day. I am inclined to think that my workboy, George, for reasons best known to himself, wishes to increase the difficulties we are in; but time will shew.

This is the march of intellect with a vengeance. I wish Mr. Brougham had only a tythe of what I am obliged to submit to from the lower orders. He would not then shew himself so strenuous an advocate for the liberty of their doing what they please, which in fact is anarchy and insubordination.

Mr. Brougham has his steward, his butler, his footman, his housekeeper; but I have none of these, so the whole weight of the contest falls upon me. I do not think Mr. Brougham has even been put in a similar situation to feel at all in these matters. A man in his Chambers, or a Fellow of a College, has no idea what a master of a household in a parish has to sustain, especially if he ventures to oppose iniquity and error.

Our two soi-disant servants have struck, and are determined to return this evening. Therefore Joseph and Anna drove to Bath in order to get some person we might depend on for giving us food. After I had finished my dinner I continued at home in order to pay the women, who had told my daughter they meant to quit in the evening, and had in consequence packed up their clothes. They went away about three o'clock.

Just after, the newsman from Meyler's library arrived and sent in his paper, which I had been reading ten minutes when a knock at the door of my parlour disturbed me. On going to the door I saw the newsman quite drunk. I handed him through the kitchen, back kitchen, and garden to the entrance door. He was so drunk that he knew not what to say in apology for his intrusion into my parsonage house, but said he had a right to do so, and that his mistress, Mrs. Meyler, the proprietress of the "Bath Herald," would support him.

This drunken fellow was doubtless sent by some one or other of my bad parishioners, knowing I had no one at home at present, and thinking to provoke me to a breach of the peace by his insolence. I only took him by the shoulder and shewed him the back door.

Returning to my parlour, I see by the papers that O'Connell has succeeded in stirring up the rabble through the agency of the priests against their superiors. The same thing is going forward in this country and in this neighbourhood as in Ireland, and Day, their agent of Downside, trying what may not be done by the same arts on a smaller scale.

I wrote the following letter to Mrs. Meyler, the proprietress of the "Bath Herald," respecting the conduct of her newsman. Surely I have worries and insults enough to sustain from my domestics and the people around me, but need not have them augmented by strangers:

"MADAM,

"The person who brought your newspaper this evening came much intoxicated, and walked through my back kitchen and kitchen to the parlour: what his object was I know not, neither did he himself know. On my leading him off the premises he was very insolent. Henceforward I wish my paper to be forwarded by another conveyance; if this cannot be done, I shall prefer dropping it altogether rather than be exposed to such intrusion.

"I am, Madam,
"Your obedient Servant,
"J. SKINNER."

Sunday, July 6.

I had so violent a headache, owing to fullness of blood occasioned by worry, that I could get very little sleep; indeed, physically I cannot support these constant agitations. A philosopher may support the occasional paroxysms of the stone, but the hourly biting of bugs and fleas, which destroys one's rest, who can support?

I prepared my sermon for Confirmation as soon as I left my bedroom to go into my study, and I examined five more candidates for Confirmation, to whom I gave tickets.

We dined with Mr. Stephen Jarrett and his aunt at five, as they had invited us yesterday when there seemed little prospect of our having servants to dress our dinner. We returned before ten, in time for prayers; the two fresh servants imported yesterday attended. The housemaid, recommended by the Warners, may become a fixture, but the appearance of the other I do not approve of.

Monday, July 7.

I wrote to Mrs. Richard Warner after breakfast, thanking her for the interest she had taken in my domestic arrangements, and saying I hoped we should be able now to boil an egg, and to have the old hen's feathers shaked up in a bed!

I could not help hinting that her spouse had withdrawn himself from all difficulties, although he had at his baptism promised to fight under the banners of the Church Militant, and acquit himself strenuously. That when I wedded my Parish at Camerton I did so for better and for worse, notwithstanding she was a cross jade and sometimes gave me untoward kicks and scratches; still, as a matter of duty, I was determined to cherish her as she had cherished me. I begged she would tell my friend Richard [Warner] he had been a sad fellow, having married one, two, three, four, and five wives of this description, all of whom he had deserted, excepting one poor old dame whom he left lying desolate in a field—Chatfield—and seldom visited her to administer consolation.

And I further said that the Church now required the active and personal exertions of all the children she had brought up; that I would as a matter of conscience, even if left alone, continue to sing out lustily the Lay of the Last Rector, and even if it did no more service to survivors than the death-song of the expiring Indian. I said the supine and time-serving behaviour of the negligent clergy will be their ruin, they having climbed over the walls of the sheepfold to profit by the warm fleeces within.

Just as I had finished my letter to Mrs. Warner, Farmer Hicks called to know how many children were to go to Visitation, in order that he might provide them with a vehicle.

He then said he wished that Skuse would compound, as the others did. I said I wished so too, but he was so stubborn he would not listen to reason, and was determined to give no more than £90 for the farm; and I further said if he did not pay me for the clover I would put him in the Exchequer!

I now hear Skuse's people are become very civil, and have put out the tythe of the wool fairly. There were thirty-nine fleeces and I had four, as Joseph *threw up* whether I was to have the ninth or they! and so gained it. I refused taking the young calf, because the other nine have been sold to the butcher, and it has ever been customary here to receive the tenth of the *value* of each calf sold.

Friday, July 11.

Mr. and Mrs. Hammond called. I learn from him that a society is forming to uphold Church and State among some of the principal noblemen in Town. God be praised! My paper to-morrow will probably give me an account of it.

Saturday, July 12.

The day has been threatening, but I hope that the hay of the two fields now about will be on the rick, as two waggons and a number of hands from the coal pits are gone to assist. I do not go into the hayfield to witness the saturnalia of the colliers, they have drunken three hogsheads of beer already, and there are seven more acres to mow and make. I may truly say the business of farming has been forced upon me, but I cannot recede a step now whatever be the consequences. The hay harvest will soon now be over! I cannot agree with the poet Virgil: "O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint, Agricolas!" nor with the orator Cicero: "Nihil est agricultura melius nihil uberius, nihil libero homine dignius."

I am heartily sick of it, and the bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen is as unpleasant to my ears as it was to Samuel when he heard these audible testimonies of the spoil of the Amalakites. How I long for the study and the calm pursuits I so much prefer to any amusements that company can give.

After having written my Journals, I went to bed, the most tranquil place I can now command, at nine o'clock.

Monday, July 14.

I rose before six, and having finished breakfast before seven I proceeded with Joseph in my phaeton to Frome, my servant, who was to be confirmed, being on horseback; the rain accompanied us nearly the whole way, where we arrived before nine. There were multitudes to be confirmed, so that the Bishop was occupied upwards of two hours. Two of my foolish flock lost their tickets, so that I had to certify respecting their having been examined.

Mr. Algar, the minister of the New Church, Frome, preached an appropriate sermon on the text, 21st S. Matthew, 28th verse: "Go work to-day in my vineyard." The Bishop afterwards read a very impressive charge to the clergy, confining himself more particularly to the enforcing the parochial duties of the resident minister, in performing which with propriety, he said, much of the evil we had to complain of might be obviated, as the resident minister would thereby conciliate the affections of his flock and prevent their straying after new pastors. He lamented that the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord were so much neglected; that the former was by some considered as a mere ceremony which must be complied with in order to admit a new member into the Church, of which Confirmation was the seal. That the Sacrament was indeed still more neglected—that few but females now were communicants, and not so many of them as ought to attend. He also alluded to the ceremony of Marriage, which had of late been considered rather as a civil rite than connected with the offices of the Church. The visiting of the sick, and the solemn service of the Burial of the Dead, he touched upon with great pathos and feeling. With respect to the Poor Laws as now administered, he declared his disapprobation, since the moral obligations which existed between children and their parents became much weakened. He also spoke in decided and very appropriate terms of reprobation against the increase of licensed Ale Houses which, although they might increase the revenues of the State, must also increase the immorality of the people. It was a very good Charge; the delivery was excellent, and had double effect, as the sentiments thus conveyed evidently came from the heart.

The singing during service was excellent, as was the reading of the prayers by the Vicar of the Parish, and I heard both to advantage, being in the chancel where some benches were set out for those who had not gotten seats in the body of the Church.

This gave me an opportunity of witnessing also the benevolence of a brother clergyman (Glossop, of Wolverton), which rose him highly in my estimation. A poor blind man, who had been led in by the chancel door during the service, felt his way up to the seat before which Glossop was kneeling and placed himself in it. Glossop immediately rose from his knees, went to the back of a pew beyond, where he stood till the sermon was concluded, leaving his seat to be enjoyed by the poor blind man.

At dinner I endeavoured to imitate this truly clerical conduct of the worthy Rector of Wolverton: "sed eheu non passibus aequis." Mr. Mead, of Marston, whom I have not seen since our Guernsey tour last year, and wished to have some conversation with, had secured a seat for me at the dinner table, just above himself and next to the chair of the Archdeacon, Mr. Law. While I was standing at the back of my chair Mr. Spencer, of Hinton, a gentleman lately come into the diocese, who was, I believe, at St. John's, Cambridge, with the Archdeacon, came and placed himself into the chair which had been reserved for me. Mead immediately said, "Skinner, you have lost your place." I took no further notice, and walked to the bottom of the table, where I had the pleasure of sitting next to Glossop, of whom, of course, I thought more highly than of Mr. Spencer, who thus superseded me. When the Bishop and his son had left the table I had some conversation with Mead, who came to say there was then a place vacant; but I did not sit long, [having] already finished my feast, which cost me eleven shillings. I am very glad I have not to attend public meetings very often, as I derive no kind of satisfaction from them; indeed, I feel particularly uncomfortable when forming one of a party at a dinner comprising thirty or forty guests; neither do I think it is merry in the hall, when chins all wag, the being obliged to take wine with those who think they confer a compliment by asking; the drinking of toasts and listening to speechifying, without which no public dinner can now pass, wherein each speaker tickles the vanity of the person to whom he replies, and returns flattery for flattery like two horses nibbling each other's necks under a hedge. All these things are my aversion. I had rather eat my beans and bacon at the Parsonage solus than be particeps, I will not say criminis, of such indiscriminate conversation, for after all it is time thrown away, and usually ends in "vox et praeterea nihil." (Proceeding to

Southfield), I did not get to bed till nearly eleven o'clock, completely tired.

Tuesday, July 15.

I rose before seven, and walked with Richard Hoare to the Iron Works at Nunney to purchase a scythe for mowing the garden, as the best in the county, perhaps in the kingdom, are made by the Fussells, who have mills at Mells, Nunney, and Little Elm, and have realised an immense property among the fraternity by their superior skill in hardening edged tools. We saw two men grinding scythes, with their noses literally at the grindstone; if any of our West Indian slaves had been seen by any of our modern philanthropists in such a situation, the tocsin of anti-servial malediction would have resounded from John of Groat's house to the Land's End. Oh! ye Liberals and ye soi-disant Philanthropists! ye strain at a gnat and swallow a camel; ye confine the people in bonds more heavy to be borne than any the most cruel of Indian planters ever imposed on their property.

I continued at Mr. Hoare's till one o'clock, and then drove home to Camerton—the rain accompanying me nearly the whole way. I never remember such a continuation of thunder weather. The water from the hills around Bath accumulated so suddenly on Tuesday evening last, and rose to so great a height, that two people were drowned at Widcombe in their beds. Mr. Baker, of Telisford, informed me that a man was also drowned in his parish.

I went to bed before prayers, very much tired. Anna continues to officiate when I do not read myself, which I hope will be equally efficacious to the servants, that is, if they feel inclined to profit by the service.

Thursday, July 17.

The old man and woman, Rossiter, whom I attended so long when they kept their beds, I verily believe had nothing really the matter with them, but made this finesse in order to be well fed. Mrs. Jarrett, of the

Manor House, sent them things from her table constantly, as we also did, and no less than seven bottles of Cape wine, as they had one a week. At length I began to perceive the imposition, and both withdrew my attendance and donations. I have observed among the lower orders that this kind of cunning is frequently considered the acme of wisdom.

Friday, July 18.

Mr. Stephen Jarrett and Mrs. Anne Stephens dined with us. Mr. S. Jarrett introduced the subject of the Church Walk, which I never like to have started, as his idea is I ought to have given up every document, that the right to the road may never be contested by the parish after my decease. I could not help speaking warmly on the subject, and requested it might not be again introduced on the tapis.

I begin to hate mixed society, and had much rather live alone than be exposed to irritation and uneasiness; indeed, even a preparation for an entertainment and the participation of it is painful.

Sunday, July 20.

The servants were very late this morning, and the cook told Anna she could not possibly prepare for Church. Anna said I always insisted on the servants going. She then said she could not stay beyond the month. She engaged to come on trial. There is now no comfort in society, either domestic or public: we are, indeed, come to the dregs!

It rained incessantly till about eight o'clock, when the weather cleared. I spent a couple of hours in my study; at prayer time the cook made her appearance, although she had declined going to Church both morning and evening. I asked her if she was a Protestant; if so, why did she not attend the service of the Church. She said she was *not* a Protestant. I asked her whether she was a Catholic. She said she was not one of the *Irish*, and therefore no Catholic. She then hurried out of the room. I have only spoken to her this once since she has been in my service about a fortnight. I will part with her at the end of the month at all events, since my servants must attend their Church constantly, whatever my parishioners may chuse to do.

Monday, July 21.

I passed an uncomfortable night, and rose little refreshed by the sleep I procured.

Tuesday, July 22.

The affairs in Ireland to all appearance must soon come to a crisis. Indeed, we cannot temporise if we consider the safety of our fellow Protestants in that country, who may experience a second edition of the massacre of St. Bartholomew if our Government be not vigilant, firm, and prompt. I have every reliance in Mr. Peele and the Duke of Wellington; but still their hands are fettered by designing men. There is an excellent petition drawn out and circulated as a bond of union against the machinations of the Papists in this country. I hope it will be seriously attended to, and subscribed to by every staunch supporter of the Constitution. Alas! how can our senators know what will be the result of their absurd concessions! Should my papers survive, it will be manifest what was the state of society in the time I wrote, and the determination of one person at least among the millions of Britain to oppose the torrent of iniquity which in all probability will bear him away with it.

Friday, July 25.

I walked with Richardson as far as Squire Purnell's, but we were driven back by the rain. After dinner we tried again to walk as far as Writhlington to visit Mr. Cookson, as we had done in the morning, but could not get to his house on account of the floods, which covered Writhlington Bridge. The thunder and rain were very violent during the morning, and the lightning vivid.

Saturday, July 26.

I was much worried by the behaviour of my children, and, what was worse, could not help shewing what I felt before Richardson. I am now writing in my study—not being able to sleep—and the clock has struck one! I feel very uncomfortable, and must go somewhere next week for change of scene, as I perceive I cannot continue as I have done of late, and dread the consequence of continual excitement.

Monday, July 28.

The morning commenced by fresh irritation given on the part of my son Joseph. His visit to Bath and his conversation with his brother I was well aware would be of no service to him; indeed, he has shewn himself as insolent as ever his brother did since his return, and will not now bear to be spoken to without using the most insulting gestures and expressions towards his parent; and indeed I was obliged to come to the determination of separating myself from him, as I had done from his brother Owen, and I accordingly wrote the following letter:

"My Dear Mother,

"It is with the most heartfelt regret that I again request your assistance in receiving Anna and Joseph. I was fearful the visit last week would have been productive of no good, that is, if both were to return to Camerton, and I have found it so. I will not worry you or myself about reverting to particulars: thank God I am now calm, and shall continue so when the cause which has made me otherwise is removed. I am ready to make any arrangement I am empowered to do for the purchase of a commission for Joseph by the sale of part of my marriage settlement; I am ready to allow Owen the interest of the third part, but I will not consent to the sale of the capital on any wild scheme he may wish to embark. My own mind tells me I have done everything I ought to do for my *ungrateful children*.

"Now with respect to yourself, my dear Mother, with my heartfelt thanks for the asylum you have afforded them, I enclose a draft for £10 for the present, and I will send another the end of next month, and continue to do so, if you please, monthly as long as they continue with you. Owen's allowance of £30, which is to pay for his clothes and pocket-money, I will continue as long as he remains with you. I am ready to make the same allowance to Joseph, but had rather you should have the direction of it, and have not mentioned it, therefore, to him. Anna's £30 per annum I will continue. I assure you, my dear Mother, I have struggled hard against the evil with all my resolution, and I may add a much stronger term, with *all my religion*; but it is now become too weighty, it presses me down by day, and by night, my sleep flies from me, and if I do not return again to my studies and to the tranquillity which has been interrupted by my idle, ungrateful, and insulting children, I know not what may be the consequence.

"Anna will, I make no doubt, be more comfortable with you and her cousin. She has been unfortunately circumstanced, and when her brothers have left you and, I hope, embarked in some line of life which may be profitable to them, she may return hither if she prefers it. I can send her piano as soon as I am able to spare the cart, and the weather is settled. You may be perfectly easy on my account, as I know, as soon as I resume my studies and am freed from the constant irritation I have been exposed to in my own house, I shall be *myself again*.

"Yours very truly,
"JOHN SKINNER.

"P.S.—The origin of all the evil I complain of in my sons is *Idleness*, and a want of proper principles. Idleness and insolence end in ruin. All my other trials are nothing in comparison. I am here wounded in the tenderest, nay, even the most vital part, and when I think what I have sown and how I have reaped, I feel a sensation of great disappointment—and the prospect is dark and dreary in the extreme.

"J. S."

My son and daughter left my house about two o'clock. I desired Joseph to tell his brother (whom I regard as far more culpable than he is—being the person who has stirred him to this fresh rebellion on his return to me) that I never would see him again under my roof, unless he came as the Prodigal Son did to his Father, and confessed he had sinned before heaven and before me, and was no more worthy to be called my son. I learnt from Joseph in the course of his conversation that Owen had said he had been putting his own conduct in its proper light to the Freres and others who might have thought he was to blame. Alas! and thus one's family concerns are to become a topic of conversation at the tea-table of triflers, who will have a pleasure in abusing me—merely because I am a clergyman. I have ever acted most delicately respecting my family, and never mentioned at length, or, indeed, without much extenuation, the conduct of my sons; and I wrote to-day expressly to Richardson to beg he would not mention what he had seen on Saturday.

I was occupied the whole of the evening in my study looking over my accounts. I find I have expended since January £583, far beyond what my income will allow, so that I must again resume my own household episcopacy, even when Anna returns. It will not do to trust to young people; with the allowance I have promised my Mother I shall be ruined if I expend as I have done. I did not go to bed until a very late hour, as I returned to my study after prayers, and did not conclude till I had balanced my accounts.

Tuesday, July 29.

I lay awake the greater part of the night meditating what was best to be done respecting my sons. They must be launched into life, and quit the nest; they then may be brought to their senses.

I drove to the Hammonds, having engaged to visit them when they called on me the day before.

Wednesday, July 30.

I rose at seven, having slept better on the whole than I have done for several nights. Change of scene and ideas is absolutely necessary sometimes, to me indeed just now it is peculiarly so.

I was occupied in Mr. Hammond's reading-room before breakfast. He has an excellent collection of the classics, and some other useful and valuable books. Mr. Hammond read in the newspapers, while I was drawing, a strange account of the disinterment of Hampden, which states that the flesh still remained on the arms and face, which must be in the nature of things untrue, as the body was not embalmed. I rather think it is a hoax upon the folly of antiquaries—not to call it by a worse name—who ransack the tombs within our Churches, which can be productive of no service whatever to science: but curiosity is the hunger of the day, and must be fed. Could it be supposed that in a civilised country and among thinking people, that crowds should collect day after day, merely to see the barn where a prostitute was murdered and interred, and, more, that the barn floor has absolutely been destroyed by persons who wish to take away a piece of wood as a relic of the place where this vile transaction [1] occurred, thus making a martyr of a meretrix? Yet this is a fact, and a dilapidation of the premises is still going on to such an extent that a person is paid to watch them! When Gilham, of Bath, murdered his fellow servant, a cast was taken in plaister of Paris of the murdered woman's face, and doubtless the artist met with many purchasers of his horrible busts. Is not this one of the infallible tokens of the decadence of the country? It was the same in Greece and Rome, and in Judea when they declined from the strong and masculine character.

Thursday, July 31.

Receiving a letter from the Bishop of Bath and Wells, inviting me to meet Sir Richard Hoare at the Palace on Tuesday, this letter I answered saying I would do myself the pleasure of going.

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[1] The Red Barn Murder.

Friday, August 1.

We had an early breakfast, and mounted our horses immediately after in order to take Chilcompton on our way to Midsomer Norton, having engaged to dine with Captain and Mrs. Savage at Norton House, which gave me an opportunity of calling on the new Vicar, Mr. Colville.

On our return I learnt that the woman who was sent from my service on Tuesday continued at the Red Post till she went off in the evening, and that the bad creature took this opportunity of saying everything to my disadvantage; since, Hammond told me that a gentleman in Bath said to him the other day: "So there are strange doings at Camerton Parsonage; Mr. Skinner has turned his children out of doors," or words to that effect, and that he replied that he knew that was not the case, since they were then on a visit to their Grandmother.

My wound is so painful of itself that I shall not heed this additional smart; besides, after all, it is only self-love which is wounded by the opinions of others. All I have to lament in this respect is that what has occurred may afford a handle to the lower orders to condemn their teacher, to accuse him of being hard-hearted towards his own children, and a variety of other malicious perversions from the reality which they derive from discarded servants. I well know what advantage may be taken in this respect, but I cannot help it.

Saturday, August 2.

I visited Hammond's reading-room, as usual, as soon as I left my bedchamber, and as it rained incessantly I agreed to spend the morning in it. After dinner I returned to Camerton, highly gratified by my visit, which gave me a change of scene and tranquillity to my ideas.

Sunday, August 3.

I had no sermon to prepare, as what I wrote some years ago on the Parable of the Unjust Steward I adapted to the occasion, as it formed the Gospel for the day. It rained so heavily that few attended the service, either morning or evening. However, I contrived to walk to Meadyates to administer the Sacrament to Sperring's mother as I promised. She is a very respectable old woman, and such as I wish there were many more of among my parishioners. I called also on Old Green, who is better. (I had observed he was very late last Sunday in coming to Church, which he is not accustomed to be, notwithstanding he is so weak from a bowel complaint that he can scarcely shuffle along with his crutches, and it takes him an hour and a half in general to walk from Redhill thither.) I had sent him some rhubarb dissolved in brandy, with directions to take a spoonful at a time. Mr. Flower has taken no further notice of him, neither Hicks, the Overseer. I desired him to send his girl for some money to aid him during his illness, and to say I recommended his doing so. Mr. Stephen Jarrett pressed me much to dine with him, but I declined, saying I had been so much from home during the week I wished to have a little rest and quiet employment in my study, that I might commune with my own heart and in my chamber, and be still. He then made me fix to dine with him the following day.

Again this sound of abundance of rain!

Monday, August 4.

I received a very kind letter from George Burrard in reply to mine requesting he would exert his influence with his brother, Sir Harry Neale,[1] to procure a commission in the Marines for my son Owen. He says he will do what he can; but as Sir Harry has to make two applications to the Duke of Clarence for his nephews, the Rooks, he fears he cannot ask it just now. Burrard mentions that his son George is returned for Lymington by the aid of his brother, Sir Harry, who has the borough.

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[1] Admiral Sir Harry Burrard Neale (1765–1840).

Tuesday, August 5.

As the carpenters were to remove my book-cases and place them in my new study during my absence, I consigned all my MSS. to their old stations in my iron chests. Whatever the world may say to my disadvantage, these at least will remain to shew I have not misspent my time during my pilgrimage through life: had my sphere been more enlarged I might have done more; and this I know, not more will be required of me than the use of the talents bestowed. Doubtless there are many duties I have neglected and errors I have committed, but I hope that notwithstanding I may be exposed to difficulties in my way to my last home, I may arrive safe at my journey's end.

I left Camerton about twelve, and drove through Paulton to Chelwood to take up Warner and convey him to the Palace at Wells, as I had promised to do—both of us being engaged to spend the week-end with the kind-hearted Bishop.

The day was altogether more promising than it has been for this fortnight or three weeks past, and we arrived without rain to our journey's end. I met with a pleasing welcome, which I anticipated, notwithstanding I doubt not many things have been said to my disadvantage that I shall never have the power or opportunity to contradict. Mr. Bowles, of Bremhill, and Mr. Cassan, from Mere, were of the party; Sir Richard Hoare was expected, but did not arrive. Mr. Bowen, in his way to Bath from his Living at Bawdrip, also dined with us, as did the Archdeacon, son to the Bishop, who is in residence.

There was a rubber of whist in the evening, and I took the opportunity of going to my room to write till prayer time.

Wednesday, August 6.

I slept but little. It was mentioned before I went to bed that we were to visit Banwell Cave, and spend the day there. As it blew hard during the night I received no very pleasing anticipation respecting the weather, and when I looked out of my window I perceived the rain falling fast; and the dingy colour of the moat which surrounds the Palace indicated that it had done so during the greater part of the night. However, as it cleared a little after breakfast, we proceeded in the Bishop's coach and four, his Lordship, Bowles, Messrs. Cassan, Broaderip, and myself being inside, and Warner with the footman on the box. The rain soon recommenced, and continued the whole way to the end of our stage, which was 16 miles. It was melancholy to observe the devastation occasioned by the floods, the marsh beyond Axbridge, the whole way from Wells being flooded and the hay wholly ruined. We stopped at Cheddar to visit the Church, and Bowles employed my pencil to sketch two of the monastic crosses, as he thinks (on what grounds I know nct) that they will contribute to establish a singular system he has set up respecting the Pillar of Thout, Teut, or Hermes.

We drove to a cottage the Bishop has erected on the hill contiguous to the cave, but the rain fell without intermission. Bowles was to be in requisition to write a poem on the occasion, myself composing some lines on the subject and contenting myself with [sketching] a view or two of the cottage and of the interior of the cave.

We returned to Wells just in time to save our light, stopping by the way at Axbridge to enquire after a gold coin, which long ago I heard had been dug up on Brent Knoll and given to Mr. Symonds, who is lord of the soil; but his wife (he being from home) assured us she knew nothing about it. The good lady's testimony and judgment I cannot entirely rely on, as she mistook me for the Bishop, near whom I was sitting, and continually addressed me by the title of *my Lord*. The sight of a gay equipage and four horses stopping at her door doubtless drove all minor concerns out of her head. On our return we found Sir Richard Hoare, who seems quite well.

Thursday, August 7.

The weather was so stormy I did not leave the Palace, excepting in the evening after tea, when I went into the town to purchase some Indian ink at the stationer's in order to renew my drawings.

I suffered a severe attack during our symposium from all the party (excepting the Bishop and Sir Richard Hoare), who, from not understanding, endeavoured to ridicule my system of etymology by asking me the derivation of several strange abstract words in order to perplex and puzzle me.

I told them a story, which had the effect of putting a stop at least to the malicious criticism of Mr. Cassan.

Friday, August 8.

During the storm of last night, which seemed to threaten the chimneys and the roof in order to make a second tragical edition of the history of Bishop Kidder[1] and his wife, not being able to sleep, I composed some lines as a private not a public memoranda of my personal feelings:

Ah me! what frowns terrific now deform
Bland Nature's face—incessant drives the storm;
Tho' earth's disjointed frame to shreds be riven,
Yet will we fix our steadfast eye on heaven.
Etc., etc.

I get but little sleep now, and to prevent a recurrence to subjects which have such power to pain me whilst I lie awake, I have recourse to this kind of occupation. I find my memory sufficiently retains the lines I compose when waking, so that on leaving my bed in the morning I am able to commit them to paper. Such occupations are at least innocent, if they are not instructive; they are at least sedatives, even if they do not remove the complaint.

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[1] Richard Kidder, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1691–1703. (Killed by the fall of a chimney at the Palace, Wells, during the night of the Great Storm, November 26, 1703.)

I finished my drawing of Banwell Cottage before breakfast, and gave it to the Bishop.

Bowles says he has written 500 lines already on the subject, and purposes leaving them with Crutwell, so that they will soon be before the public. He is the most absent man I ever knew when engaged in his versification; no company prevents his writing, when he ought to be engaged in conversation; this morning we had done breakfast ere he came to the table, dripping with rain, having been walking backwards and forwards in the garden during the heavy storm. I was obliged actually to rub him down with a silk handkerchief, fearing he might take cold. Yesterday evening, while Sir Richard Hoare, the Bishop and two others of the party were playing at cards, he threw himself on the sofa, close to them, and snored most loudly. Such eccentricities may be the companion of genius, but they certainly are not pleasing in society, especially where real distinctions ought to be made. When Bowles is in residence as Canon of Salisbury he will, I think, cut a queer figure, and read a ridiculous chapter of accidents to the people. He left after breakfast for Bath in his close carriage, as did Sir Richard for Devonshire, and Mr. Cassan for his residence at Mere. I drove Warner to Glastonbury, during a cessation of the rain, in order that he might see the progress made by Mr. Reeves in his mansion: indeed, it will be a beautiful building and very much in character, as it is constructed in the style of the reign of Henry VIII, and this may be supposed to have been coeval with the destruction of the Monastery.

A Mr. Lunn, who has just been presented to the Living of Butleigh, and his pupil, Lord Alexander, grandson to Lord Hardwicke, dined with us. Mr. Lunn, I think, is a well bred and intelligent man. The subject of etymology was again brought on the tapis, but not by myself, and it was treated by him in a very different manner from what it had been by the former party. I understand he was considered at Cambridge as a first-rate mathematician, and his opinion, which is evidently in favour of the analytical process which I have adopted, has more weight with me.

The Bishop, I am assured, thinks entirely with me, and is very anxious to have me complete the work; indeed, he was kind enough to offer me his cottage at Banwell, if I chose to retire there for a few months in order to proceed in my studies without interruption; but this I declined, as I must have my books with me; besides, the interruption of strangers coming to see the cave would be almost as bad as that of the farmers at Camerton.

As my assistance was needed to play a rubber in the evening, I did so, and as a rare occurrence I note it: I was a winner of three shillings.

Saturday, August 9.

The wind blew and the storm raged nearly as violently as ever during the night. On looking out of my window I perceived the rain driving fast, and the elms beyond the moat waving like willow trees. My carriage was ordered at half-past ten; I promised to convey Warner home, and to take an early dinner with him at Chelwood. Therefore we determined to weather the storm; but, ere we left the Palace, a violent gust split in twain one of the largest and most beautiful tulip trees, perhaps, in the country, while it fell with a loud crash, much to the regret of the worthy Bishop: but his serenity of temper is, I firmly believe, not easily discomposed. Oh! that I could attain to this composure; but I fear I never shall, and I much doubt will ever be calmed excepting *in the grave*. Nothing could exceed the real benevolence and kindness of the worthy Bishop; he has quite won my heart and attached me to him. Surely I have no reason to complain of my fellow creatures when I meet with such men as Sir Richard Hoare and this kind-hearted man, and many affectionate relations besides. It is thus Providence ordains our trials, and gives the means of supporting them. I have ever found it so, and in that confidence I commit myself and all that I have into His all-merciful disposal, and shall under every dispensation rest assured that whatever is is right.

> *Hope humbly, then, on trembling pinions soar;*
> *Wait the great teacher, Death, and God adore.*

Monday, August 11.

I settled the accounts after breakfast: the haymakers have cost me more than the value of the hay which has been cut since the rain has commenced.

The season is most awful, and will, as a dispensation of Providence I apprehend, be productive of the most serious consequences to the country at large. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is our daily prayer, and we must not change in our hearts the sentiment the tongue expresses. Unless some benefit was to result from this fearful state of things, we are assured it would not take place.

After dinner I took up Plutarch, with whom I have always a feast, and dipped upon the life of Pericles.

Tuesday, August 12.

I was occupied in my study and in overlooking the workmen till one o'clock, when I drove to Mr. Hammond's. The rain recommenced with such violence that I thought it folly to pursue my drive to Stowey, where I was engaged to dine with Mr. Hartress, and wrote an apology for my non-appearance. I therefore dined with the Hammonds, and spent the evening there. Hammond's coachman, who rode my horse to Stowey with my note, on his return threw the poor, old, and faithful creature down, and broke his knees. I would rather have given ten guineas, poor as I am, but as it was an accident I had nothing to say on the subject. But I had rather have incurred the risque of many drenchings than it should have happened.

Wednesday, August 13.

I slept but little last night, and left my bedroom more languid than when I entered it. I walked to the stable the first thing to examine the poor horse's wounds. One knee is badly cut, the other only slightly scratched. I will never again suffer any servant to ride it, not even my own. I took leave of my kind host after breakfast. I then resumed my vehicle and proceeded to Radstock and to Midsomer Norton, having engaged to dine with Captain and Mrs. Savage. It rained so violently I could not attempt to draw the Church, as I had purposed doing previous to its being pulled down.

The new Vicar, Mr. Colville, dined with us, as did Mrs. Stukeley and her niece, Miss Palmer, who are staying with the Savages at Norton House. After tea I was occupied in making two drawings for Mrs. Savage. I did not get to bed till past eleven.

NORTON HOUSE, MIDSOMER NORTON.
Thursday, August 14.

Still the same dreadful weather. I read before breakfast in the newspapers an ample and particular account of the execution of the horrible murderer, Corder.[1] It occupied nearly two sides of the paper, that is, including his trial and remarks upon it. There needs not any other proof of the deplorable state of depraved feelings to which this country has gradually arrived through the instruction of novelists and fatalists, than this document.

I have before remarked (in my Journal) the eager curiosity with which people of all kinds and classes flocked to the barn in which the corpse of the unhappy woman[2] had been interred, and that these pilgrims to the shrine and novelty took away portions of the barn floor as reliques! but the acme of depraved feelings was exemplified on the day of the execution, when the detestable wretch was launched into eternity. No less than 10,000 persons assembled on the plain surrounding the gallows: there well-dressed and delicate females exposed themselves to the rude jostling of the mob, and all the horrid language which generally is uttered by base and unfeeling men on the occasion, in order to witness the death of a fellow creature. These females pressed even to the foot of the gallows to witness his mental pangs and his bodily torments, which in all probability were very violent, for the executioner held by and pulled down the legs of the wretched sufferer for two minutes in order that his convulsive pangs might be shortened. Yet, notwithstanding this, even when *ten* minutes had elapsed the limbs were still convulsed.

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[1] William Corder (The Red Barn Murder).

[2] Maria Marten (The Red Barn Murder).

The worst part of the recital is yet to come. So eager were the populace to retain some memorial of the transaction, and of the executed murderer, whose end ought to have excited the utmost horror and detestation, that they vied with each other in purchasing the cord with which he was hanged at a guinea an inch, and even the Sheriff took home in his carriage the pistols and sword [with which the murder was supposed to have been perpetrated], and declared he would not part with them for 100 guineas: there had been a quarrel as to the right of possession between the keeper of the prison and one of the constables—doubtless occasioned by the expectation of gain. Surely all these are indications of a dereliction of all sober sense and feeling, and an overruling folly which depraves the understanding, taking the sole possession of the vulgar mind.

I have read nothing nor heard of nothing of late which has so completely disgusted me as this horrid narrative.

We did not breakfast till ten o'clock. The rain still continued without intermission. Towards the middle of the day I walked to the Church under the escort of Captain Savage's gardener, who held an umbrella over my head while I sketched the devoted edifice, a memorial of which I was anxious to preserve before it be *levelled to the dust*! According to appearances I think it might have stood a century longer, had repairs to the amount of £200 been bestowed; but architects are not the persons to advise repairs, especially if they may be afterwards employed to draw the plan and superintend the building of a *new* Church. The beautiful stone cornice of quatre-feuilles on the outside of the edifice, which I believe is unique, will be destroyed, also the doorway, which I have before noticed in my Journals as very curious, retaining the Anglo-Norman and Saxon zig-zag over a Grecian scroll. I made a sketch also of the wooden effigy of a Knight, probably one of the Gournays, who possessed the Manor of Norton, I believe, in the reign of Henry I, from grants by the Norman Conqueror. On my return I planned a plain altar, like those in use seven centuries ago, and requested Captain Savage to use his interest to have the said effigy laid upon it under a plain canopy near the Altar. The doorway betokens the antiquity of this Church which is about to be demolished! The tower was built during the reign of Charles II, and chiefly at his expense.

It is somewhat singular the man who attended me from Captain Savage's with an umbrella was servant to Archdeacon Coxe when he made the tour of Monmouthshire, of which he afterwards published the account, in which iter Sir Richard Hoare was the Archdeacon's assistant. I was engaged in drawing till bed-time. It rained almost without intermission the whole of the day; the consequences will be most awful.

Friday, August 15.

I rose early, meaning to finish my drawings of the Church before breakfast, but while shaving in a hurry I cut my chin, which detained me in my bedroom endeavouring to staunch the blood till half-past seven o'clock.

I left Norton after breakfast, and called on the Boodles (at Radstock) on my return. Mrs. Richard Boodle and her husband returned home yesterday, and are as well as can be expected; but I dare say the kind-hearted daughter has felt, and will feel her Father's death severely, although the good old man came to the garner in due time, like a ripe sheaf of corn, at the age of 78. Although he was a lawyer, yet I firmly believe that he was *an honest man.*

I found on my return home that the parlour was nearly painted, Emery himself being occupied in finishing the last coat of red. It appears more gaudy at present than suits my taste, but I hope it will be rendered more sombre by the pictures.

Mr. Stephen Jarrett called in the evening to return some papers I lent him last week. He is possessed of all the curiosity of his Mother, without her tact; he made several enquiries respecting the dimensions of my orchard, and two bedrooms abovestairs, which he says he never before had seen. He is not, I hope, anticipating the produce of Naboth's Vineyard, like his Mother, who resembles the wife of Ahab in more particulars than one: Eheu satis! my spleen need not be shewn on paper, nor shall it be if I can help it. I therefore shall proceed to employ my mind on more profitable subjects. How time passes! and day succeeds to day, and nothing is done but trifles. If I live till next month I shall have been twenty-eight years Rector of this place, and I fear I have done no good whatever as to the real benefit of the Society of which I am an instructor. Still, I have not slumbered on my post.

I paid young Feare £3 15*s*. 0*d*. for the colliers his Father kindly, as a neighbour, permitted to come and mow my grass. This is nearly 3*s*. an acre, besides all their food, and more than a gallon of beer an acre. I never therefore shall require their assistance again: what with their food, money, etc., etc., I have already expended nearly £30, and the harvest is not yet begun.

Saturday, August 16.

Notwithstanding I strove to employ myself and prevent the intrusion of unpleasant retrospection before I went to bed, I lay awake thinking upon the situation in which I have been placed by the malice of my fellow creatures, and the base ingratitude of my children.

This morning dawned brightly; there was not a cloud on the horizon: again it is overcast! My mind has of late been as gloomy as the atmosphere. Lighten this darkness, O Lord!

I went to Meadyeates after having written thus far, and called upon old Green, who is very ailing, and the Parish Doctor has neither been to him nor sent anything for him since his first visit; the Overseer, Hicks, has only given him half-a-crown at one time, and two shillings at another during his illness, and he has no pay from the Parish. He worked as long as he could work, breaking stones on the roads, and received sixpence a day: this has been stopped. Hicks it was that let the old man, *Evans*, die in the Poor House, actually eaten up with maggots which bred in his flesh through nastiness. He is the most hard-hearted fellow I ever knew—a truly brutified English farmer of the modern school. I called afterwards on old Mrs. Taylor, and read to her parts of the Psalms, and conversed for nearly an hour. She is getting weaker, but I do not think is in any immediate danger. I am much pleased with her manners and really religious remarks, and will endeavour to see her at least once a week. Mr. Trelawney Collins, the new Rector of Timsbury, is expected to-day.

The errand woman brought my newspapers and a letter from my Mother, also another dunning epistle from Joseph's tailor at Sandhurst, for which money had been left when this idle boy quitted the College, to which I wish in the agony of my soul he had never gone. It was the most unfortunate thing that could have happened to one of his disposition; but it is useless to repine at what is past. I did all for the best, although it has turned out so badly.

I went to bed immediately after prayers.

Sunday, August 17.

I slept but indifferently and rose about seven, when I went into my study before breakfast. Afterwards I wrote to my Mother, [but] when I wished to seal my letter, no seals were to be found. My servant lad, George, says he told the maidservant when I was from home to lock them up, as workmen were in the house, but she did not do so. I make no doubt they have been stolen. One of the seals I much value, as it was my father's, and bore the family arms. Nothing can make up the loss to me, but I must bear it. When Bush and his wife were with me I lost two gold rings. The son, who was employed by the painters last week, I hope has not been the guilty person. If he were, I hope I may never know it, as I should not like to prosecute him for a capital offence, as he was born in this house, and is my godson. The smaller one's possessions are the less chance there is of being annoyed by losing them; if I had not a gold set of seals, the person who stole them might not have been tempted to the theft.

Monday, August 18.

I was a very late riser. On going into my study after breakfast I made [some extracts] from the inimitable Barrow, on the visible and distinctive marks and characters of an overruling Providence directing human concerns. Strange that the greater part of mankind prefer the trash of modern bookmakers to this genuine gold; but this is another symptom, and perhaps one of the principal causes of the rapid decadence both in mind and morals of the English nation.

Tuesday, August 19.

I returned home after breakfast, and, it being a fine day, went into the hayfield. The crop is not spoilt, although it has been soaked by the rain upwards of a fortnight.

I found two letters when I got back to the Parsonage, one from Samuel Skinner, the other from Henry Hoare saying there was a vacancy in a regiment going to the West Indies he thought I might procure for Owen, and that the impediment he had would not be of much consequence. Samuel Skinner mentioned the several applications he had made through his friends for a cadetship for Joseph, but without success. I am sure I know not what these youths are to do. If they had employed their time and talents as they ought to have done, and prepared themselves for the university and, by steadiness, have gotten scholarships, as I expected they would have done according to the plan I had chalked out for them, all would have been well; but they *were idle*, and, what is worse, *insubordinate to their superiors*. Therefore they marred their own prospects in their first set out in life, as well as disappointed the expectations of their Father, who had made such sacrifices for them by bestowing on them the very best education that could be procured. They will not see the matter in this light; but they will do it ere long, as they will enter into a different grade of society to which they have been accustomed to move in, if the situations I am requiring for them cannot be procured.

Wednesday, August 20.

I wrote a long letter to my Mother before breakfast stating the necessity there was for the boys occupying their time while continuing with her, as idle habits were not easily overcome. I had recommended to her their reading Plutarch's "Lives," and something more solid than newspapers and novels; but this is the *mental* food of the rising, or rather, falling generation.

The bell tolled after breakfast for old Ruth James, sister to Stephen Rossiter; she was nearly eighty. I had for several years paid her £2 13*s*. 0*d*. as schoolmistress to six children. I sent to her, but she preferred committing herself to the direction of the Methodists at the last. I am more and more convinced that the regular clergy are now of little or no use to the people: whether they who purpose thrusting us from our seats will do better is another consideration. If the Government were to support the Catholics, and make that the *sole* religion, I cannot but acknowledge the people would be kept in better order.

Thursday, August 21.

The people in the hayfield, who had had a double potation of cider, were not, however, contented; but just as I was stepping into bed, the servant knocked at my door to say they were come for more. I desired her to tell them to go home, that I was sure they had had too much already, and that my parsonage was not a pot-house. My life is indeed become a burden. In order to supply employment for my wounded spirit I occupied the whole morning in tinting the sketches I have lately taken. This employed me till dinner-time, after which I took up one of the volumes of Montfauçon, and had just applied myself to reading when my servant, George, came to the parlour door, giving a violent knock and saying that the people had no drink in the hayfield. George also said he had been working all day without beer, and could do so no longer. I asked why he had not gotten any. "Because," he said, "the barrel is out!" I asked what he wanted me to do; they were such a set of gormandising gluttons, they never were content: that they had sent for cider last night, when I was just going to bed: that I had granted them cider as well as beer because I thought they would get in my hay before dark; on going to the field I found they had not done so. I said that if they had drunk up all the beer I could not help it; how can I get beer at a moment's notice? But he should have his wish—that he might take the horse and cart and go to White's at Red Hill, and get an 18-gallon cask of small beer, such as was drunk in my family; and if he did not like that, he might leave me; if he imagined that I thought him of any value he was mistaken; I had done much for him, and had met with the same ingratitude I had done from others.

Saturday, August 23.

Sarah brought the seals I had lost, saying she had found them in the drawer of the little cabinet in the best parlour, where she had placed them herself. This is somewhat strange that she should so strenuously deny all knowledge of them, even when the boy said he told her to put them away. Warner assured me that she was a woman of the strictest probity. I have, however, had all the silver things locked up which are not in immediate use. I am doomed daily to witness the growth of iniquity in this wretched place, and may almost exclaim with the Psalmist, "There is none who doeth good, *no not one*."

Sunday, August 24.

On going into my study I endeavoured to shake from my thoughts the occurrences of the preceding day, and strove to be calm and composed, in order to perform the sacred functions of the day. The subject I selected for my discourse was *Death*. I am quite ashamed of having suffered myself to be hurried away by my feelings so frequently of late. It has been well remarked that an angry man is one of the most weak and absurd of all people; indeed, it is with humility I turn into myself when I have thus offended. If I had not walked to the churchyard (yesterday) I should not have met Stephen Jarrett. I had written to him, and in this letter had given sufficient check to his undue interference in the matter of his trying to prevent the cutting of the ivy from off the Church, which was much needed, and putting the lock on the Church gate; why, then, put myself in the way of personal irritation? I was put to the test during the morning service. Mr. Stephen Jarrett came into the pew with his aunt (Mrs. Anne Stephens), and banged the door as he entered it with great violence —the children were singing the morning hymn; he, although unaccustomed even to join the singers, when they came to that verse:

Let all thy converse be sincere,
Thy conscience as the noonday clear,
For God's all-seeing eye surveys
Thy secret thoughts, thy works, and ways.

sang it out loudly, fixing his eyes on me with the greatest imaginable insolence. Mrs. Stephens, his aunt, looked at him with surprise, and, as I thought, with reprehension. He did not sing beyond these words. Hicks was in the pew next him, and, I observed, noted what he did, as indeed everyone must have done in that part of the Church. I kept my eyes to my book during the whole service, and never took them off, fearing that I might have seen something to draw away my attention from what I ought to be engaged in. I found some difficulty in getting through the service.

The post brought me a letter from my son Owen, written in a style which indicates he is returning to a sense of his duty, which, indeed, affords me sincere satisfaction. I could not help thinking it was sent to reward me for my endeavours to overcome my own perverse feelings. We must not be too severe in reproving the failings of others, if we have a sense of our own imperfections.

The Church was crowded in the evening with attendants on the funeral of Ruth James. The corpse was brought into the Church, and I read the portion of Scripture appointed for the Burial Service instead of the Second Lesson for the day. The people were very attentive, a pin might have been heard to drop.

Monday, August 25.

I did not sleep well, [but] felt during the time I lay awake more satisfaction in the idea of my son's turning again to his right way of thinking than anything I have felt for some time, and was eager to get into my study to write to him in reply to his letter, the purport of which was that he was not anxious to go into the army or to embark in any profession without my consent, and wished me to point out what I thought might be most eligible under present circumstances. I accordingly stated I was glad to find [he had] discovered that the army would not suit him; also found how difficult it was now for a young man to procure any situation in a respectable line of life, especially with the little interest and money I had to push him with. He seemed now to wish to return to the law as a profession; but if he undertook the study, he must at least devote eight hours a day, and not suffer any amusements or interruptions to divert him from his purpose.

With respect to the Church, if he had ever turned his thoughts that way (which I understood he had done, but thought the impediment in his speech an insurmountable obstacle), I had to say I did not think his impediment would be a bar which might not be surmounted. I had lately seen a Mr. Parfett, the present Incumbent of Glastonbury, whose stammering was infinitely worse than what he had laboured under, and he had been in the Church twenty years; and I have heard of others. If he thought from his heart that he should feel more comfortable in this profession, I would not oppose it: he might not be an idler, but might prepare himself for taking pupils, which would increase his income and perhaps extend his interest for procuring a Living. I begged he would weigh carefully what I had written on this subject, and rest assured if he put his own shoulder to the wheel I would endeavour to assist him, and I only prayed he might make a choice not subject to change.

In the evening came a note from the undertaker, inviting me to attend Mr. Deeke Smith's funeral at Timsbury, on the 28th.

I continued reading till prayer time. It seemed to me that my servant, George, had taken too much of the beer that he was so anxious to combat for.

I also wrote a note to Long, the tailor at Priston, to make me a new coat against the funeral on Thursday, for my present garb is so shabby I shall be ashamed to appear in it. The carpenter's man has been painting in the new room above stairs the whole of the morning, but the smell is so powerful in my study I can scarcely bear it. In the evening there came an invitation from the Hammonds to dine with them on Saturday, which I declined. What a strange custom the English have gotten into of giving dinners, not merely for eating and drinking, but to keep up such and such sets and societies. If you are not found at the dinners of such and such people you are nothing! Even political parties are principally decided and known by the dinners people give, and the greater matters of business are discussed over the bottle. For my part, I think the morning the best time for business. I am never able to do anything which requires attention after I have eaten a hearty dinner and taken more than three glasses of wine.

Tuesday, August 26.

On my road to Timsbury this day I had half an hour's conversation with Mr. Trelawney Collins,[1] who is a well educated and well disposed man; but he little knows what he will have to undergo in this detestable neighbourhood, governed by attornies, apothecaries, and coal heavers. The people have been civil to him, and I hope they will continue to be so; and so they will till interests clash, and then he will find what I have done—if he sails with the stream, he will give up the best interests of the Church and be at the beck *of all the seceders,* and if he acts as I have done, with firmness, he will have to withstand a host of foes; and, poor man, I perceive by his weak state he cannot have the physical strength to withstand them. From my heart I compassionate him on his coming to reside here. I spoke in general terms that it behoved us to assist each other, and said whatever assistance I could give on his coming amongst us he might depend on as being sincere: that I had smarted myself, and if I could save him any pain or unpleasantness he might be assured I should not be found wanting.

I saw old Bacon, who broke his thigh some time ago and was so very insolent to me when lying on his bed—it might have been his bed of death. I went up to him and said that his quarrel with me about money matters some time ago should not make him quarrel with his Maker: why did he not come to Church? I asked him whether he had forgotten the way to Camerton Church. He said he was so lame he could not walk so far. I said I was going to preach on the Resurrection from the

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[1] The Rev. Charles Trelawney Collins, A.M., Rector of Timsbury, 1825–1841.

Dead, and our hopes and prospects in another life; it was a subject we were all alike interested in.

The man was civil, but did not come.

Wednesday, August 27.

I slept but little last night. On leaving my bedroom I heard a voice saying to my servant: "Yes; but has he had his breakfast?"

On going downstairs I saw young George Burrard, who told me his father was on the road to visit me: that they were passing through Bath to Cheltenham. Burrard soon arrived, and, as is his manner, in a most friendly and feeling tone said, "I am come expressly to require you to do what I am come to ask, and I will take no refusal." I said that no one in the world, perhaps, could so fully command my exertions as himself; I only asked what it was he wished me to do, and if I could do it he might be assured I would. He said, "We are going to France, and you must come with us!" I began to hesitate, and to point out the unsettled state of the parish, and the workmen in the house. But he would hear nothing on this head, and said that I must accommodate these matters: that change of ideas would do me much service, and I must at all events promise to accompany him: that he did not mean to go for a fortnight, and that I might arrange accordingly: that, as he went for the education of his children, he meant to take a house at Versailles; but that George and myself might make our excursions ad libitum, but that George must return the beginning of January in order to attend to his duties in Parliament! (of which *he, George, aged* 22, is lately become a member). I said I liked the arrangement, and would return with him. Burrard and his son left me soon after breakfast.

I rode from Timsbury to Priston Rectory. Hammond requested I would stay dinner. The day being fine, and a moon, I thought I might do so, and get back to Camerton in the evening. I accordingly put up my horse. As their dinner was so late, I gave sixpence to a man working at the house to go to my parsonage and tell the servants not to set up for me, as I should sleep at Priston.

Thursday, August 28.

I counted every hour-strike of the deep-toned bell of the Church tower from eleven till four, and then dropped off to sleep. The servant came in early for my clothes, and roused me, so that I may safely say I only closed my eyes for two hours. I went into the reading-room for an hour before breakfast, and occupied myself with some of the Letters of Junius. I left Hammond's at nine.

On getting home I found the tailor, of Priston, had made me a frock coat, instead of a dressed one, which I ordered to attend the funeral of the Rev. Mr. Deeke Smith at Timsbury this day. I found I had written to him to make me the same kind of coat as the former—thinking that he had made me a dress suit, so that I had nothing to say, only to request he would not continue gossiping in the kitchen, which he is accustomed to do, I hear, in *this* neighbourhood longer than ordinary.

I was in good time at Mr. Smith's (at Greenhill). He died of an ossification of the heart. A large party with myself attended the corpse to the grave. Mr. Collins read the service in an impressive manner. Poor man! When I looked at him I thought he might soon be called to occupy his own narrow house, near him he now committed to the ground. He is to all appearances in a consumption. After the service was concluded we went to Mr. James's, who spread out a hospitable luncheon, which I took as my dinner, and left my finery, that is, a hat and scarf of satin, in Miss James's custody, for my daughter Anna.

The want of sleep unhinges me entirely. The smell of paint also incommoded me during the night.

Friday, August 29.

Still the smell of the paint!

Saturday, August 30.

The smell of the paint is very offensive.

Sunday, August 31.

I walked after morning Church to the old woman at Meadyeates. I found that the dropsy had increased, and her hands as well as her feet are much swollen. I read the Visitation for the Sick, a Psalm, and afterwards the sermon I had preached on the Resurrection, with which she seemed much pleased. Her husband, she tells me, died of the dropsy ten years ago, and that she has no hopes of getting over it; that Curtis told her he could scarrify her legs, but it would afford only temporary relief, and therefore she would not submit to the operation, and will, in all probability, depart hence ere I leave my home, which will be a weight off my mind. Hammond will take charge of the Church, and, being so near, I hope the Parish will not be much further troubled; but the visitation of the sick I hold an indispensable duty. I shall leave monies in his hand to distribute, and I hope to do so without appearing ostentatious. If there was any staid, trustworthy woman in the parish I would prefer her having this fund, but where am I to find such?

The Church was well filled in the evening; there were two baptisms and two churchings. One of the godmothers quite disturbed the ceremony by grunts and groans. I looked hard at her, but it had no effect.

As I walked back from Church I saw my poor old horse so lame that he could not put one of his feet to the ground. I accordingly sent my servant, after dinner, to Radstock to speak to the farrier, who came before dark and said it was merely a corn. I hope it may prove to be as he says, for the old horse is such a favourite I cannot bear to have him suffer any unnecessary pain. I was occupied after tea in the dining parlour, which I now use as my study, for the upper room is painting and preparing as a setting room for my daughter. I had intended it for Owen on his occasional visits to my house; but, alas! these will never now perhaps take place, as he has written to say he has given up all thoughts of the law, and sees nothing but the army likely to suit him. I am sure I know not what is to be done, unless the long-expected explosion takes place in Ireland; then there will indeed be sufficient call for our youth to be laid quiet. Alas! this is a sad alternative. I hope I have preserved my mind this day. I noted down the occurrences before I went to bed—in fact, these pages are sketches of my own mind, but I fear self-love draws too flattering a picture.

Thursday, September 4.

In reply to my Mother's letter respecting my permitting Anna to come with her brother Joseph to Camerton till I move from thence, I sent a messenger expressly to her house, desiring that my son and daughter might come out by a chaise, to be here in time for dinner. Joseph had written me a very feeling and penitential letter the beginning of the week, and promised most faithfully not to do again what made him so miserable on reflection.

Stephens brought me two [letters] and the newspaper; one from the Bishop, very kindly written, saying he was at Weston-super-Mare, and should be most happy if I would come to him there on a visit, in order to view the country in the vicinity. The other was from Sir Richard Hoare, saying he was very glad to hear I meant to visit Brittany and Normandy, and that he had sent a book to Ford's Library he thought would be of service to me in pointing out what was best worth seeing.

When such upstarts as Stephen Jarrett endeavour to lower one in the eyes of the people, it is some consolation that the most sensible still continue to esteem one.

My son and daughter arrived about one o'clock, and seemed delighted to return. I felt happy in seeing them happy, and I sincerely hope they will not make me uncomfortable again.

Friday, September 5.

Whether it was owing to the paint or over-fatigue I know not, but I awoke about one o'clock with so great a giddiness in my head I was obliged to light my candle and walk about my room. I also bathed my head and temples with opodeldoc and took some medicine, but could not fall again to sleep; and there was all the time a kind of buzzing in my ears, which rendered it very uncomfortable. I left my bed, however, at seven, and continued my employment.

Saturday, September 6.

We have done a great deal since Thursday, the new room, the passages, and the best bedroom being stencilled, and the new bookcase put up. I am obliged to write my Journals when I can catch a minute or two, being completely turned out of all the rooms. How glad I shall be when this my last enterprise in housemaking be finished with. It will certainly be a most comfortable habitation, if the people permit me only to enjoy it for the few years I have, and do not hunger after my empty chair before my hour be ripe. I certainly am far from well—heavy and stupid I feel, and collect my ideas with difficulty. It may be that bleeding may relieve me, but I do not like to begin this remedy.

Wednesday, September 10.

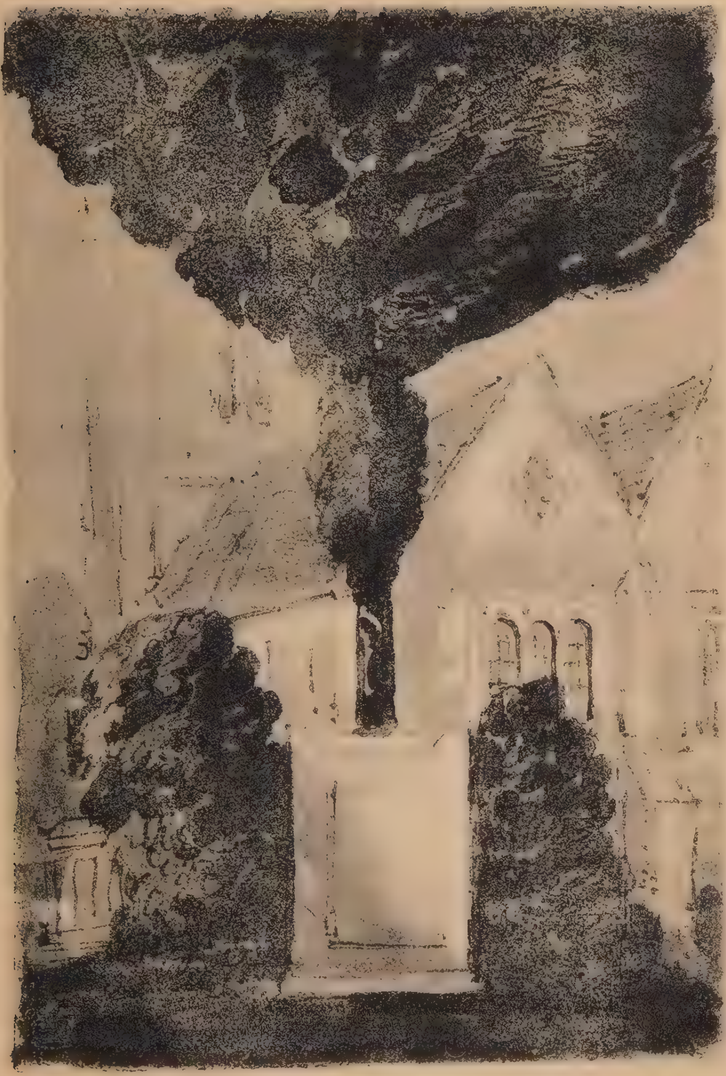
I am happy to say the harvest is nearly gotten in, and the crops much better than I expected. I have agreed to have the dining-room painted for two guineas.

Thursday, September 11.

I assisted in getting my books up in the study. The bookcases will be more than sufficient to contain them. As the time approaches for my departure I feel a kind of indescribable qualm, but I must get over it, as I know a change of scene is absolutely necessary, my mind having been so much unhinged of late. I purpose being at the Star Inn, Southampton, on Friday next, when the steamer starts for Havre.

Friday, September 12.

This being a fine morning, I made several drawings of the Parsonage, Hermitage, and tomb of my dear wife and daughter, in order to complete the 84th volume of



Camerton Church, with the tomb of Mrs. Skinner in the foreground

Journals before I leave home. After tea I retired to my new study—the first time I have occupied it as such. The fire draws very well.

I gave directions to Owen about receiving my tythe, and also wrote to Hammond, who has the care of my Church, respecting his visiting the sick, etc., etc., during my absence.

I hope now there will be no obstacle to my setting off, as I purpose to-morrow evening. The weather has changed, but the clouds will, I hope, blow away.

I wrote my Will on one sheet of writing-paper, which I shall leave with my Mother, in case anything happens to me. In this Will I have given all my MSS. Volumes, now eighty-four in number, to the British Museum, in case they will accept them on the terms of making no extracts for fifty years after the time of my decease, and to preserve them in the *three iron chests*!

1829

Upland House, Claverton Hill,
Thursday, January 1, 1829.

As I lay awake last night I reflected on the extraordinary custom of ringing in the New Year; the bells at Bath were very audibly heard while employed in this service last night and this morning. How many are there who have heard those bells will cease to hear them next year? Some employed in ringing them will perhaps have them rung as knells at their decease. So passes the world; we know not how long our journey may be, but this we know, that when the Great Author and Provider for our existence calls us hence, it is the most fitting time for our departure. We must neither delay nor hesitate, nor busy ourselves therefore like foolish children in playing with trifles on shore when our attention should be on board; we should be prepared to obey the voice of the Master of the Vessel which is to convey us to the ocean of eternity the moment He calls us. . . . Still, my place would be *soon filled at Camerton*; but there are some things in respect to literature which could not well be completed by another hand when mine is cold in the grave. "God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven!"

Friday, January 2.

I wrote to Sir Richard Hoare, who has ever been most truly my friend.

Sunday, February 8.

On looking over the Prophecies of Isaiah this morning I met with the following pathetic exclamation, which may be well applied to the recent loss we have sustained in the fairest Church in Britain by the hand of an incendiary, vide chapter 64, verse 11: "Our holy and beautiful house where our fathers praised Thee is burnt with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste."

If the visible signs and prefigurations of the Almighty obtained now, as they did in the time of the Jews, I should denominate the burning of York Cathedral[1] a token and omen of the destruction of a great part of the Protestant Church—the purest and most enlightened, and I may add too the most adorned establishment of any in Christendom. Alas! who were the incendiaries?[2]

Friday, February 13.

Burrard, who returned from Town last night (12th), tells me that he heard some very able speeches in the House of Commons, and thinks the Ministers will carry their Bill by a great majority there, but it is by no means certain that they will do so in the Upper House. I cannot think how men can be so blind as to surrender one of the vital principles of our Constitution, and be induced to believe it is absolutely necessary so to do to preserve harmony in the country, without which Mr. Peele pretends that the whole machine of government must stop.

Monday, February 16.

This is a very mild day; I shall endeavour to go down into the parlour to-morrow. I have now been a prisoner to my bedroom nearly two months, which in addition to the month I was ill in France makes a period of three months; now, with returning strength returns the wish to prolong existence. Perhaps I might have been spared much misery if my career had been shortened, for perilous times are at hand.

Owen is making his arrangement to go to Cambridge, to Sidney College; he will procure a bene decessit from Trinity College, Oxford, which will enable him to count the terms he has kept. I have told him his future prospects must depend entirely upon his own exertions—he must determine to study hard in order to obtain a good degree, when he may procure a fellowship. He has promised me to do so, as the college he is going to is a small society, and I hope very different in all respects to what *Trinity College, Oxford, now is*. I hope he will really do something.

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[1] February 1, 1829.

[2] Jonathan Martin, a religious fanatic; proved insane.

Tuesday, February 17.

The papers to-day are alarming as to their contents; the Ministers have taken an awful responsibility on themselves; how far the King has been persuaded we know not.

Saturday, February 21.

Owen goes to-morrow to Cheltenham in his way to Oxford, and from thence to Cambridge, where he must be in college by twelve o'clock Wednesday. He has my best wishes and prayers for success; if he has resolution to pursue mathematical studies, I think he will be able to accomplish his wishes; he will have a private tutor, and not return home before the long vacation, at least so is the arrangement now.

Sunday, February 22.

Owen went in the middle of the day by one of the Cheltenham coaches, as the places in the Oxford were all engaged on account of the contest about the re-election of Mr. Peele. I hope to my heart he will be thrown out as a turncoat.

Monday, February 23 *to* 26.

We have been in much trouble since Monday, but I hope things will mend. My brother Russell, Anna, and Joseph being engaged to drink tea with a lady who lives at the bottom of the hill, Anna asked whether I had any objection to Joseph's driving them thither. I must confess I did not much like it; the idea of getting a post chaise was banished, and they accordingly went about six o'clock. I drank tea with my Mother downstairs—the first time I have done so for two months. Nearly an hour after they were gone I heard someone calling out on the lawn before the house; a few minutes after, Mrs. Treherne, the upper servant, came into the parlour saying she wished to speak to my Mother, who accordingly went out. I did not remark my Mother's absence till it had exceeded an hour, and I heard the front door open and a great bustle, as if there were several people coming in. I immediately went from the parlour, and saw the little hall full of people, who were bearing Anna without sense or motion. They said she had been thrown from the carriage, but had no bones broken. Soon after my brother Russell was brought home and carried upstairs to his room, and Joseph at last arrived, having hurt his knee and suffered several bruises. From him I learnt the particulars: not having a drag-chain, as soon as they came to a steeper descent the horse, finding the carriage press upon her, set off at full speed, when the breeching broke; not being longer manageable, she ran the carriage against a post, broke the axle, and with the shock they were thrown out. Joseph and his sister were so stunned, they were taken insensible into a gentleman's house close by; Russell was able to walk thither. I got to bed about twelve, but could not sleep. I went several times during the night to Anna's room door; she got no sleep, and complained much of her head. Still I trust, as there is no local injury, she may recover the shock.

I heard to-day from Owen; he has settled all his business, and is admitted at Sidney. I am glad he has been spared what we have suffered.

Saturday, March 7.

As all the invalids are so much better, I purpose going home on Monday.

Sunday, March 8.

I begin to long to return to my duties at Camerton, and find myself so much better I shall certainly go home to-morrow.

CAMERTON PARSONAGE,
Wednesday, March 11.

I have been so uncomfortable for some time past in not having balanced my accounts for the last year, which I knew well would greatly exceed my income, that I was determined to set about the unpleasant but necessary task to-day. Indeed, half the world is ruined from this kind of cowardice. I find that my outgoings have been upwards of £1,200. The later addition to the house, and repair and painting, amount to £152 8*s*. 0*d*. exclusive of the new furniture, which I expect will be £50 more; Anna's piano, with attendant expenses, £60; wine bought of Mr. Hoare, half a pipe and bottles, £43, which are all extras which will not occur again.

	£	*s.*	*d.*
	152	8	0
	60	0	0
	43	0	0
	£255	8	0
Spent in France	130	0	0
	£385	8	0

I have told Owen he must live within £200 a year at Cambridge. I am determined to lessen my scale of living, and accordingly I shall send notice I do not mean to have any carriage or livery servant in the house; and with respect to household expenses, I must look to them myself, as Anna is not able to speak to the servants when things are going on wrong. I am determined to settle all bills weekly, which will soon shew the scale I am living upon.

Saturday, March 14.

My daughter, who is quite recovered, being anxious to return to Camerton, I desired, by letter, she would order a post chaise, and her brother Joseph attend her. They arrived in time for a five o'clock dinner. It is very singular, the carriage had nearly been overturned within 300 yards of my house, and if Joseph, who was on horseback, had not jumped off and held the horses' heads it certainly would.

We must have done with carriages for two reasons, economy and safety; one's own legs are the best carriers after all. The more we can do for ourselves in these times, and indeed at all times, the better; we shall not then feel the change of circumstances so much. I am perfectly indifferent what I eat, and what I drink, and wherewithal I am clothed, so that what I use be only neat and clean. I have left off wine for my health's sake; the more we depend upon the things of this world, the more we become enslaved. The great secret of life, if we look for comfort (happiness I will put out of the question), is to be constantly occupied, indefessus agendo.

Tuesday, April 14.

Owen came a little after breakfast time, with his brother Joseph. I was glad to find him looking much better than I expected, and he seems better reconciled with his College.

Friday, April 17.

This being Good Friday, I preached in the morning on the text, St. John, ch. 19, v. 5, "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe." There were only a very few persons present. I wish I could get a good Clerk, but my little state of Camerton is somewhat like the state of the country; I am obliged to work with bad tools or get none at all to work with. Neither of the Churchwardens now attend. What is to be done? I am like the captain of a king's ship sent to sea with a bad crew, and no officer I can depend on.

Easter Day, April 19.

There were two persons in Church who behaved improperly, but no Churchwarden now attends to preserve order. I administered the Sacrament; only twelve attended, among them only two men—Smallcombe and White—the others were women.

Monday, April 20.

The same unpleasant weather. Owen and Joseph, however, continue to get rid of the heavy time by fishing. Books are out of the question. How singular it is that my children seem to dislike every kind of pursuit which has contributed to my comfort. When I gave them a good education I expected they would have taken a turn for literature, but alas! a book seems to be a bugbear with both. Idleness is the order of the day. Owen assured me he meant to study hard in order to take a good degree and entitle himself to a Fellowship, but I am convinced he will not do so. Joseph will, I suppose, eventually go into the Army at home, if he cannot get a Commission in the India Service; but I shall not have the means of purchasing on to a captaincy, and then he will be discontented, and more displeased with me than ever. The system of education at our public schools now seems to be to throw off all restraint; they rebel first against their teachers, and then insult their parents if they presume to admonish them for their good; because young men of fortune do such and such things, they will imitate them, and without the means are equally ambitious of distinguishing themselves *in mischief*.

I find the Bill respecting the Catholic Emancipation has a much larger majority in the House of Lords than I expected, so the King will be powerfully upheld; but, alas! before he dies he will rue the deal which will lose him the affection of his subjects, and afford them a plea hereafter for tampering with their oaths of allegiance with him or his successors, in the same manner as he has tampered with his Coronation Oath.

Monday, April 20.

Mr. Crang, the apothecary, sent a message this evening to say Mrs. Hammond died as he expected in the course of the day. She had been so blooded there appeared to be little chance of her rallying. What a system do the gentlemen of the lancet now pursue in cases of inflammation! there appears to be little chance if the disorder be violent, and can alone be remedied by copious drafts of the vital stream. The only difference seems to be, the patient may die quiet through exhaustion, instead of quitting the world in a raging fever. Poor Hammond is left with a family of seven children; religion alone can support him under his afflictions.

Tuesday, April 21.

I learnt that Hammond was become quite tranquil, and derived consolation from having his children round him. This is a most happy frame of mind. I was fearful from what I heard, [on sending] to ascertain if possible whether I could be of any service, that he could not have borne the society of his little ones.

Wednesday, April 22.

I have nearly finished the drawings, etc., etc., of the six first volumes of my French Tour. Anna is of great assistance to me in setting the sketches on cartridge paper, but her brothers take no part in what they know would be giving me pleasure; when it rains so hard that they cannot pursue the amusement of fishing, they might amuse themselves by doing something useful, instead of smoking segars. Joseph, when I spoke to him about something very trifling, was very insolent, and grossly insulted me; when I said I would not put up with such treatment from anyone in my own house, and begged he would behave properly as long as he continued with me, he said he would not remain a moment longer, so he took his hat and returned to my Mother's. It is a great misfortune that my Mother is so near, and that she moreover listens to his improper representations of his conversation and conduct towards his Father. Owen also misbehaved himself exceedingly; in the course of conversation he told me he meant to go into the Church. I said that, with his present disposition, he was not fit for such a profession, and if he went into the Church merely for the sake of passing an idle life I could prophesy he would be mistaken, since a storm was rising against the Church which would prove all its members, as it were by fire. I will not attempt to recapitulate what passed, and what insolence I experienced. It seems I am destined to have these heartrending interruptions to my quiet. I had fondly imagined when I built me a comfortable study I might have enjoyed peace and tranquillity in my own mental resources, but alas! I am wounded in the tenderest part; I have been a most indulgent Father, as every act of my past life must testify. I fear what I complain of is too general; all discipline is gone; the rising race are self-willed and ferocious, but due retribution will be made. I spent a miserable night. How can I expect to get well if my mind is thus kept in a state of anxiety and irritation?

Friday, April 24.

Mr. Hammond's brother came to ask whether I would perform the service at Mrs. Hammond's funeral. This I told him I could not do, I felt so nervous and low, and should not like to expose my feelings; indeed, I could not help bursting into tears while he spoke to me, I am so much shaken by late occurrences. Owen went in the mail to Bath after dinner. I hope he will think better. I told him he must begin at the root, unless God were with him he would derive no lasting benefit from man; that as he was going to devote himself to the service of religion he must begin by the reformation of his own heart. I gave him the "Works of Thomas à Kempis" in a small pocket volume, which has been my companion in all my travels many years; it was given me by my uncle Page when I was at Oxford, and has frequently administered consolation when nothing else had the power of doing it. I made him promise to read a section every day. I felt very low when he left the Parsonage, but must still endeavour to bear up. The weather still continues stormy and uncongenial for the time of year; but what are external tempests to disquietude of mind? "Blow, blow, thou winter wind. Thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude."

Tuesday, April 28.

It has blown a heavy storm from twelve to three o'clock; when I am now writing in my study, my room shakes under me.

Mrs. Hammond was buried to-day.

Thursday, April 30.

I received a letter from the Bishop, who is on his way to Town; he signs himself my friend, and I hope he will prove so when it comes to the push. I only ask for justice, and a patient investigation of the documents I have in my possession in order to prove there has been a regular conspiracy of the bad people in this parish under the authority of those who ought to know better. The time will soon arrive when I shall speak out, and not in hints.

Sunday, May 10.

During the Prayers at Morning Service Cottle's son was hawking so loud when I commenced the service I was obliged to look at him in order to check him from interrupting the service. The pew which Burfitt built without any authority from me or the Ordinary, has been more than once the scene of great impropriety of behaviour during Church time, for the sides being higher than the seatings, so that the congregation are not able to see the people who are sitting down, they talk and laugh and misbehave themselves greatly. This evening the pew was filled by two sons and a daughter of farmer Skuse, a son of Hicks, John Rossiter, and a female in mourning; the elder Skuse I saw talking and laughing with the person in black, and I said aloud that, as there had been great impropriety of behaviour in that pew, I requested there might be no repetition of it this evening. John Rossiter stood up in the pew and looked very insolently at me, but I took no notice.

Thursday, May 14.

I put up the following notice on the Church door;

NOTICE

"Since I have had occasion to notice misbehaviour for several times in the pew built by Joseph Goold and Burfitt, who had no authority to erect it without my consent and the consent of the Ordinary, this is to give notice, if the misbehaviour is repeated I will present the pew to the Court at Wells in order to its being restored to its original form of separate sittings."

Saturday, May 16.

The weather is now quite summer; we seem to have overstepped spring this year. The apple and pear trees, as well as the plums and cherries, have abundant blossom, which will in all probability bear much fruit unless a cruel blight assails them. The post brought me a note from Joseph saying how sorry he felt for his past behaviour, and promising not to offend in future; but he has so often made the same declaration that I cannot confide in it. However, I am very glad to find he does not continue obstinate, and shall write to him soon. After tea I composed part of my sermon before I went to bed.

Thursday, June 11.

The Camerton Club marched to-day, in number about 1,400. They played "God Save the King" as they passed the Parsonage.

Friday, June 12.

I learnt a piece of intelligence which did not surprise me, and I may truly say did not distress me, namely, that Mrs. Jarrett had offered Camerton for sale, and that the Advowson of the Living was to go with it. The latter part of the intelligence I did not expect, as I had understood from Mrs. Jarrett herself that Mr. Gooch was to be my successor in the Living. Perhaps the whole may be a ruse de guerre. The plot this Medea has been so long hatching is now nearly ripe.

Sunday, June 14.

After tea I took a walk with Anna to Writhlington by Woodborough, where Purnell's dogs were like to have proved obstacles in our way. This worthy Justice keeps curs in order to deter people from passing by his house, which is situate on one of the oldest British roads in the kingdom. This hot weather I should feel very uncomfortable to have blood drawn by one of them. Luckily I had a stick when a lop-eared creature rushed close by me. I desired the servant who was on the premises to deliver a message from me to Squire Purnell, saying, if his dogs came near me while passing along the public road, I should do what I could to prevent any further attack.

Monday, June 15.

John Rossiter, my quondam Churchwarden, who has entirely deserted his Church, behaved himself very insolently, merely because I mentioned the particulars of his having induced Harris the Clerk to find out the wrong lesson, to lay a trap for me. This is a bad fellow; he told White that there was no use of clerk or parson at Camerton, and that they had better wall up the Church door.

Tuesday, June 16.

The post brought me a letter from Sir Richard Hoare to make enquiries after my health. I determined to commence my sixth letter to him on the subject of Camulodunum, giving him a comment on the text of Tacitus as far as regards that celebrated colony.

Thursday, June 25.

As Mrs. Jarrett sent me some hothouse grapes yesterday, I went with my daughter to thank her. She seems out of spirits. She says nothing about selling the place.

Saturday, June 27.

It rained the whole day, which will be of infinite service to the whole country. I finished my letter and notes for Sir Richard Hoare; it occupies thirty-four pages, closely written, and I hope will carry conviction with it.

Tuesday, July 14.

The post brought me a letter from Bowles, but he holds out no hopes of doing anything for Joseph; as he says it is as difficult now to procure a cadetcy as an office under Government. I felt low. Indeed, not all the powers of my mind are able to bear up against the depression of spirits I now feel. I pray for tranquillity. I am sure it was in the Bishop's power to have done what he promised for Joseph. What am I to do under present circumstances but remain patient? If the Bishop has forgotten Joseph, he may have an opportunity hereafter of befriending Owen.

Monday, July 20.

I passed a bad night, and had a return of spitting of blood, so that I did not leave my bedroom till past eight. My conscience is not my tormentor, otherwise there would be reason enough for my not sleeping. After breakfast I wrote thus far of my Journals. The weather still seems unpromising. I am quite surprised that I have heard nothing from Sir Richard Hoare. Butterfly friends seek their hiding-places as soon as they perceive the storm approach, but I thought he would not have deserted; perhaps he has not. At any rate, there is One who never will desert me, if I only cleave fast to Him. What is man! No, rather let me make friends and consolers of my books; I find them the same to-day, to-morrow, and the next day. Still I note down the workings of my own mind; these memoranda are in fact records of humanity. I shall take care that they are not read till this generation be passed away; it will matter little who were the actors in the drama, and what part they played, either good or bad; they are but sketches of human life. I cannot but notice on looking back upon the pages I have written several years ago the same querulous complaints against my associates. I ought to have exerted more energy, and risen above such considerations; so much self-love in all we do that there is ample room for humiliation. Indeed, indeed, I do humble myself; the world with all its malevolence cannot make me so low as I actually feel in my own opinion at times. Let me correct my own failings first. With truth does St. Paul exclaim, "Wretched man that

I am, who will deliver me from the burthen of this death?" Oh, that I could before I die bring my mind to that perfect state of reliance in the Superior Director of all events, that I might look upon passing occurrences as I do on the clouds which now move *dark and threatening before my window.*

Exaudi genitor sancte meas preces
Clamorisque sonum percipe lugubris
Nec vultum misero subtrahe hostibus
Omni ex parte prementibus.

. . . . .

1830

Friday, January 1, 1830.

ALTHOUGH the ringers were so noisy at the commencement of the last year, they were very quiet at this; not a clapper was moved. I hail this as a happy omen, and hope my parishioners will restrain their nonsensical tongues the ensuing year—I mean in those matters which do not concern them; but I have strong anticipations that they will not be taught to understand, but will proceed in the career of their iniquity. Such are my reflections at the commencement of a New Year.

Tuesday, January 5.

Joseph went into Bath immediately after breakfast to bring back his brother. I walked to the Manor House to call on Mrs. Jarrett, who is going into Bath for further advice, but Mr. Crang says he cannot think she has any actual malady beyond that of being extremely nervous, which is indeed the worst of all maladies. On my return I found Owen arrived. He seems in good health and spirits, and proposes accompanying his brother and sister to the ball. After dinner I continued with my family, and played two rubbers of whist before supper, which I partook of for the sake of sociability, although it never agrees with me. I went to bed immediately after prayers.

Wednesday, January 6.

I read with Joseph the 6th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and one hundred lines of the "Odysse of Homer," beginning Book 4th.

Thursday, January 7.

When my sons and my daughter returned from Chilcompton they expressed themselves highly pleased with the ball, which was well attended. I told Owen if he felt an inclination to accompany me to the musical meeting at the Bishop's I would introduce him. Accordingly we drove to Wells, and arrived at the inn before five. We dined en famille at the palace, and at seven the company began to assemble in the two large drawing-rooms, which communicate with each other, the organ being in that farthest removed from the gallery, in which an elegant supper was set out, extending nearly the whole length of that noble apartment. The music was chiefly from Handel: "Comfort ye my people"; "Oh had I Jubal's Lyre," that pathetic piece from Jeptha; Haydn's "Creation" afterwards. These were sung by performers from Bath. Afterwards some amateurs played and sang some voluntaries, among whom Miss Maria Powell, the Bishop's grand-daughter, seemed most to excel in the sweetness of her voice and the execution of her playing. They compute there were upwards of 120 at this concert, besides the Bishop's own family. It was nearly midnight when I retired to rest.

Friday, January 8.

We assembled to breakfast in the gallery at nine, having first attended prayers in the chapel. Afterwards the performers took their stations near the organ, and we were again gratified by harmonious strains. Some of the songs we heard even exceeded in my opinion the former selection.

As the Bishop had invited Owen and myself to continue over the day, we occupied the interval till dinner-time in visiting the cathedral, St. Cuthbert's Church, and the environs of the city. We dined at five. After dinner I was attacked and was obliged to defend my position of Camalodunum. Tacitus was produced, and some unfounded assertions respecting that author negatived on my part, I have reason to believe to the satisfaction of the company. I cannot help remarking from certain oblique hints that the Bishop begins to waver in opinion respecting me in more important circumstances than that of Camalodunum. The Bishop little knows me, but when he does so he will severely blame himself for entertaining suspicions which are injurious to me;

like Cæsar's wife, I require to be placed above suspicion. But enough; so much for egotism. After tea my good host and some of his guests sat down to cards. I got to bed before ten. During the evening I had an opportunity of telling the Bishop that I conceived it behoved us all to be firm and collected, and not corrupted by empty reports. I know not whether he perceived what I alluded to in my own case. He promised to call at Camerton in his way to Bath, and gave me an invitation to his house when there. I am convinced of his regard, but he should not be warped by others.

Sunday, January 10.

I felt uncomfortably irritated to-day by the behaviour of the people.

During the Evening Service I had to notice the bad behaviour of the schoolgirls, and also of my foot-boy, George, who was laughing; when I spoke to him on the subject he denied it: he is a bad boy. I have often said if the patient Job had been Rector of Camerton he might not have had much celebrity on account of that virtue.

I know my infirmity, which is too great irritability, yet I endeavour to correct it; of one thing I am certain, I never retain the unwelcome guest beyond the impulse of the moment, and every hour of my existence at this place is so exposed to insult that one must be a stock or a stone not to feel it.

I continued in my study after tea till bed-time.

Saturday, January 16.

Mr. Wynne, from Nostal Priory, Yorkshire, sent me three pheasants and a hare, which arrived to-day. Sir Richard Hoare never used to omit sending me some game at Christmas. I fear, though a kind-hearted man, he is not without the little weakness of being hurt because I differ from him in a mere matter of opinion, and am about to publish what I have written on the subject of Camalodunum. I have observed a difference in his manner towards me, but this may be only imagination; time will shew. Thank God I never solicit nor care for the worldly countenance of any man: I am too proud to solicit patronage.

Sunday, January 17.

I read prayers in the morning, and preached in the evening to a very thin congregation. If I who take some pains to instruct my hearers, and have their interest at heart, cannot succeed, how can the ignorant and time-serving Clergy do anything for their benefit? but I will bear yet further. I feel very uncomfortable, on a day, indeed, when no unpleasant feelings ought to ruffle and discompose the mind, and one ought to be solely resigned to the will of God. Do I not teach this, and ought I not to be influenced by the consolations I hold out to others? Why do I say with my mouth, "I commit myself and all that I have unto Thy keeping, O Lord," and still look to second causes? Is not this folly, nay worse, hypocrisy? Ought I not to esteem myself favoured, if I am employed as an instrument to bring about in any way that which is fitting to Him?

After dinner came a note from Mr. Strachey, inviting myself, my sons, and my daughter to Ashwick to dine on Wednesday, and offering beds.

Wednesday, January 20.

It had snowed so much during the night that I considered it as sufficient apology for my putting off our visit to Mr. Strachey, which I did in a lively letter to laugh off, if possible, the dreariness of the season. Heal, who delivered the letter, told us that some of the lanes were impossible for a horse or carriage to pass, especially that going from the Parsonage towards the public road; so that even had we wished to have fulfilled the engagement we could not.

I was able to complete some writing, but suffer much from the cold, and from some circumstances among my children, worse than the cold. King Lear suffered, and others have suffered like King Lear, but this is more burning than a cancer to one's flesh: surely they will reflect when I am no more, of the pain they have caused me: are my children worse than those of other parents, or is it the fashion of the times to do exactly as they like?

Friday, January 22.

A man named Rogers called after breakfast with a certificate signed by the Apothecary and Churchwarden, and stating that his wife wanted assistance from her parish. I said I could not set my hand to the certificate without I knew it to be fact: I should see her if she was really as ill as he had represented. The man said, "You will come soon then, Sir?" I went accordingly with him.

That the poor are much distressed, and will be more so if this weather continues, I have no doubt. I told my daughter on my return to order some coarse beef, and tell the cook always to have a quantity of soup in the boiler, that we may be able to assist those who are really in absolute want; but as our Collieries are in full work we shall not be so much pinched here as at other places.

Saturday, January 30.

Just as I went into the breakfast parlour this morning my daughter told me she had seen a carriage pass in front of the house; who could be our visitor at so early an hour? My surprise was not of long duration, as I heard the Bishop's voice in the hall. He took his breakfast with us, in his way from Wells, and I have promised to dine with him at No. 1, Royal Crescent, on Monday, having previously engaged to spend a week with my Mother in Bath.

Monday, February 1.

It froze harder last night than it has done the whole winter. Joseph had ordered a chariot to come from Bath to take us in: the road was in parts very slippery owing to the snow, but we arrived without accident at my Mother's. Joseph preferred walking to going with us in the chariot. At half-past four I walked to the

Royal Crescent, where the Bishop has taken a house belonging to Sir Thomas Strange for as long a period as he continues in Bath.

I found a pleasant party: the two Duncans, Warner, Mr. Shew, and Mr. Montgomery; also Mr. Meade of Chatley. I returned to my Mother's at ten. I was not a little astonished, as I walked through Bath, to observe the streets so crowded with prostitutes, some of them apparently not above fourteen or fifteen years of age.

Tuesday, February 2.

As the Bishop had overnight invited me to breakfast, I walked to his house by nine o'clock; Mr. Meade and Warner were there and I took Joseph with me, who was rather in fortune's way, as our kind-hearted entertainer gave him three tickets for concerts to which he subscribed without being able to attend them himself.

I afterwards walked with Warner into the town, and made several calls; among them we stopped a quarter of an hour at Reeves's the sculptor's, which gave me an opportunity of seeing the tomb about to be erected in Camerton Church to the memory of my predecessor, Mr. Prowse, or rather to the memory of the whole family, since it embraces the pedigrees of his Father, his wife, etc., etc. . . . . What nonsense!

In order that Pride should have a hint, if not a punishment, I told Mr. Reeves, and begged he would mention it to the family, that although I readily gave permission for a tomb to be erected in the Chancel to the memory of my predecessor free of all expense, I did not suppose it would have contained the genealogy of his whole family: that for the inscriptions not connected with the Rev. Mr. Prowse as Rector of the Parish something should be paid.

It is now nearly thirty years since this gentleman died, and no memorial of him having existed has hitherto been here, till one of his daughters left £200 for a monument to her family.

When I came to the Living of Camerton the house and premises were in such bad repair that I might fairly have required £200; whereas on the plea that the family were distressed, I only took £20, and paid £35 for fixtures, so in fact I was £15 out of pocket. I only mention this as a forcible example of vanity and family pride.

Wednesday, February 3.

I again took my breakfast with the Bishop, and afterwards walked to visit Hammond, who I understand is about to forget his late loss in another connection. This is another proof that violent emotions are less lasting than those which are not expressed: the shallow stream makes the most noise. I must confess I did not think he would so soon have forgotten his late wife, but that is his concern, not mine. The present age is an age of insensibility; indeed, all feeling of men of the world is of a selfish kind.

Thursday, February 4.

The easterly wind of yesterday has made my throat and chest quite sore, and on rising this morning I felt no inclination to leave the house; the Bishop sent down his servant with a note to ask me to dinner, but I felt so ill and uncomfortable I was obliged to decline it. I am very sensible of his great kindness, and his wish to shew himself my friend, when others hang back.

Friday, February 5.

My son and my daughter, accompanied by their Uncle Russell and their Cousin Elinor Page, went to the concert at the Rooms. I continued within doors reading Sir Walter Scott's novel of "Rob Roy." We dined at half-past four, and stayed to drink tea with my Mother; at seven we returned home in a close carriage, as I do not like to expose myself to the open air. The ground was so slippery the horses could not keep their legs descending the hill to Camerton, but absolutely slid down on their haunches. The servants were gone to bed, and I had much ado to awaken them; it was not nine o'clock, and methinks they might have been found watching.

Saturday, February 6.

Joseph, who had not accompanied us last night, skaited home this morning, and just as we were settling down to dinner Mr. Dennis arrived from Bath, and spent the evening; he is a man of great information, and I enjoyed his conversation much.

Sunday, February 7.

As I knew from report that my guest, Prebendary Dennis, was a celebrated extempore preacher, I requested he would officiate in the pulpit. He took his text from the Epistle for the day, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?"

Without hesitation he entered upon the subject, which was well arranged, as though it had been written, which is saying a great deal. His discourse was well delivered, and seemed to make such impression on the people that I asked him to give another discourse in the evening. He was not so happy in this, since he got into a very diffuse explanation of the Jewish religion, and a comparison between it and the Christian, which I am sure scarcely one of the congregation could comprehend. I could not compliment the Preacher as I had done in the morning on his discourse, which was as remote from practical divinity as the former had been applicable to it. I do not mean to detract one iota from Mr. Dennis as to abilities, but I am afraid that extempore preachers are not perhaps themselves aware how opposite such pleadings would be, with regard to consistency, were they recorded by pen and ink.

We spent the evening in conversations. Although Mr. Dennis is a man of decided abilities, I should be tired with the treat of his conversation too often repeated: it is like a rich-made dish which one may taste of now and then, but would not suit for one's daily food.

Monday, February 8.

Joseph drove Prebendary Dennis after breakfast to his house in the upper part of Bath; with half a dozen of elder wine which he admired so much when warmed after supper, that I thought I could give him this satisfaction at a small expense. I hope he was satisfied with his visit, but I had rather another time that he should come to Camerton on a week-day rather than on a Sunday.

Wednesday, February 10.

I sent my Journals from January to my brother Russell by Joseph, who is gone into Bath to have his hair curled for the Ball in the evening. No letter from Owen, who has now left me a fortnight. I was given to understand that he was to go immediately from Bath to Cambridge, but now I hear that he took Oxford in his way. I fear much that he is spending beyond his allowance, and keeping up expensive and improper acquaintance. I see no chance of getting any appointment for Joseph; I wish to my heart he could get some employment, as it is a sad state to be unemployed. Alas! I have but a gloomy prospect before me.

Joseph returned about the middle of the day, and brought with him the four volumes of my Journals which have just been bound, making ninety-seven, and one which my brother has in blank paper to insert my letters on antiquities will be numbered ninety-eight, so that the hundred will soon be completed. After all it is much ado about nothing, for what interest will my transactions be to anyone after I am gone hence?

I continued in my study after tea till prayer time reading one of Sir Walter Scott's works, for I could not settle my mind to anything serious.

My son and my daughter attended the Old Down Ball.

Sunday, February 14.

I saw Wilcox, before Church, respecting whose child I had received a letter from Dr. Barlow of the Bath Hospital, and remitted three pounds for caution money, for the child's admission, who has the leprosy. After Church I walked to Tunley to call on Hicks, the Churchwarden, and get him to come in the evening to sign the certificate for the poor man Wilcox; it would, I knew, be of no use to send him a note, as he says he cannot read my writing: how decidedly reversed are all our clerical institutions: the Clergyman is now obliged to wait upon the Churchwarden to request he will condescend to attend the Church to do his duty.

The service in the evening was numerously attended, the congregation attracted by the Singers, who now muster a large band of various instruments. I do not like their mode of performing this part of the service near so well as that of the schoolgirls; but if it induces the people to come to Church, I will bear with them patiently. I am wedded to my charge for better and for worse, and I must be content.

I fear if we occasionally analyse our feelings, there is more of vanity in our regrets than we are inclined to allow: thinking we have abilities to shine in a higher sphere, and instruct a more enlightened assembly, pleased with the soft incense of flattery stealing in our ears: then perhaps all the daily disgusts we are in the habit of receiving would be no longer complained of, and we should be pleased with the people because they would be pleased with us.

After tea I composed the following lines in my study, on the subject:

How chilly howls the sullen blast,
How ceaseless falls the snow,
Ah! see how Winter binds all fast
Nor suffers streams to flow.

Vain selfish Mortal, why repine
Because a narrow sphere
Thy arduous energies confine
Frost-bound and torpid here.

If the Great Giver does not chuse
Thy talent to employ,
'Tis thine to keep it from abuse
Nor mix it with alloy.

In storms, in sunshine, and in shower,
Thy will, it must be best;
Great God! I own Thy Sovereign Power
Deep on my Soul impressed.

I write down my thoughts, in order to shew that I do feel as a Christian, but I trust not as a coward: time will shew all things: if I am to be called into action shortly, I must feed on strong food figuratively, after the manner of the pugilists, or in other words, buckle on the whole panoply of Religion: of one thing I am certain, I will keep my post till absolutely driven from thence, which is more than probable will be the case.

Wednesday, February 17.

I feel very unwell, and think it is the bile which hangs about me. I strive to amuse myself by reading novels, and have finished that of the "Black Dwarf" by Sir Walter Scott. I must be reduced to a sad state when I feel obliged to such nonsense for a pastime.

Sunday, February 21.

There was no ringing for Church; when I spoke to White he was impudent, and when I told him I had given the ringers a Christmas-box on condition that they would ring the bells for Church regularly, and attend themselves, he said, if I minded so much about the money, they would give it me back again. White told me afterwards that the reason he had not rung for the last two Sundays was because he had gotten drunk Saturday night, and had too bad a headache in the morning to bear the sound of the bells.

These are sad reflections to occupy my mind on a Sunday; they quite destroy all the serenity which I at least ought to enjoy one day in seven.

Wednesday, February 24.

I have felt so unwell lately I am resolved to see what horse exercise will do, and accordingly purchased a little poney for my own riding this morning, for twelve pounds. My son on old Jack, and my daughter on her mare, accompanied me for two hours on Clan Down, and whenever the weather is tolerably fair I mean to continue the exercise.

I forgot to say, notwithstanding my various occupations this week, I was enabled to read a novel called "The Young Reformers," shewing the tendency of the doctrines of the New School to demoralise Society. I am so much pleased with the plan of the work, and indeed with its execution, that I propose buying the book, as a standard addition to my Library, the only novel I believe I ever purchased or wished to.

Sunday, February 28.

It rained so hard last night that the water streamed through the roof of the Chancel. I read Prayers in the morning, and preached in the evening on the Seventh Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and having discoursed on the heinousness of the now too prevalent crime, as destructive to all social comfort, I enlarged on the government of the thoughts.

We walked to Meadyates to call on Frapnell; he seems going rapidly. A woman of the name of Barr was sitting with him, who also had been ill, that is, in a low nervous way for some time.

On my entering into conversation with the poor man he began to say that he had been brought to that state by the enemy; that, in short, Witchcraft had been practised upon him and that the woman who was sitting with him had been also a fellow sufferer. He told me a man had called upon them and shewn them a paper which said that others had been bewitched like them, and that they would not get well again unless they could undo the charm. I said I had read that paper, and it was a pack of the greatest nonsense I had ever seen, and that the person who gave it him, and received money for thus deceiving him, might be very severely punished by the Magistrate.

I wished to make the poor man smile, and I succeeded by saying I had heard of a man who believed he was made of glass, and begged his friends not to come near him for fear of breaking him; another had fancied himself a tea-pot: that his own mind might be so weakened by illness, and his nerves so relaxed that he might not be able to shake off such absurd fancies: that nothing could harm him if he believed only in God, and if he said, "Get thee behind me, Satan," when any evil ideas came into his mind he would sneak away like a coward.

Tuesday, March 16.

There was a wedding by license this morning, the Miller of Cridlingcot and a woman from Wellow. This was to be kept very secret, and I perceived the reason, for the bride was already far advanced in the way which women sometimes are who love their lords.

This frequently occurs amongst the lower class of society, but I did not think those who moved a step higher adopted the fashion.

I had a letter from Owen by the post, thanking me for the £50 draft I sent to Cambridge to him, and promising to do everything he can to contribute to my comfort by attending to his studies. It has given me more satisfaction than any letter I have had from him for a long time, and I answered it with great pleasure.

Wednesday, March 17.

I walked with Anna to visit Frapnell, and endeavoured as much as possible to do away with those unfortunate fancies he labours under about being bewitched, but I fear I shall not succeed. I explained to him the nature and full meaning of the Sacrament, which he never yet has received. He says he means to come to Church on Good Friday.

Tuesday, March 30.

We walked to Paulton after dinner, and attended the funerals of five of the colliers who were killed by the breaking of the rope last week; two more are expected to die. There could not have been less than 1,000 people collected. Mr. Rees-Mogg, the Clergyman, shewed us to a seat in the gallery, where we were out of the crowd: not only the churchyard, but the street itself was thronged. Cabel, the engineer to the Old Pit, said he believed fifteen persons had lost their lives in that pit.

I was made very uncomfortable by Joseph's behaviour before I went to bed: it seems I cannot have any long cessation: if this excitement continues, I shall not be able to do anything for myself, but I hope I shall get rid of the weight on my heart, and I will get blooded to-morrow if it be not better.

Monday, April 5.

It was a beautiful morning. I went to receive my composition for tythe of the farmers, this being the day appointed for their payment. Joseph had previously written out the memoranda of the payment of each individual, so that there was no difficulty or delay. There were sixteen sat down to dinner, and everything went off very well, as all the farmers were very civil, excepting John Rossiter, who has taken Keel's farm. Ever since I dismissed him from the office of churchwarden for his very gross behaviour in conspiring with the clerk to lay a trap for me he has carefully avoided touching his hat to me when we meet, which is certainly of no consequence whatever to me; but when he has the meanness to eat at my expense and behave in that manner it is rather going too far. Poor Keel came to the Parsonage before I went to the meeting of the farmers to say he could not then pay his tythe, but was going to have a sale, and would then pay it. He could not help crying. I really feel for his situation; he has contrived to keep his head above water for ten or twelve years. The farmers paid in general pretty well.

The post brought me a letter from Owen from Cambridge; he says he shall return in June. I hope he will be inclined to make me more comfortable, but I always dread it when he and his brother are together.

Easter Sunday, April 11.

I awoke early, and on opening my window-shutters was happy to perceive it was a fine morning. I felt very anxious about getting through the duty, as I heard there was to be a wedding, baptism, and churching, in addition to the services of the day. However, I never performed the service with greater ease to myself. The wedding was much of the same cast as the Camerton weddings in general are. I took the opportunity, after the ceremony was concluded and the parties were detained in the Church owing to a heavy shower of rain, of giving a word of advice to the young people. I asked them in the first place whether they had a house to live in. The girl answered, No; that they were for the present to live with her father (a wretched profligate fellow). I said they ought at least to have been as wise as the birds of the air, who made themselves nests before they brought up their young. The man, or rather the cad, said they could not wait for that. I said I was certain it never would answer for any newly married couple to live with their parents; however, it was my advice that they should make their parents as comfortable as they could for the house-room they afforded, and get a place of their own as soon as they possibly could. I then asked them whether they ever came to Church, and I advised them for their own good as they were beginning life to attend to the duties of religion: that nothing would prosper unless they made God their friend. They must not think I advised them to attend their Church for my benefit, it was no such thing; as an individual it was no benefit to me whether my Church was properly attended or quite empty. I must and should perform the services, even if there were no other than my own family and the clerk present. Now, as the rain fell fast I could not better employ the interval than in endeavouring to say something which they might remember; of course, they would always recollect the day of their marriage, and I wished they would connect it with the advice I gave them: if they did not think of it in the springtime of life I knew they would do so on their deathbed. I therefore begged they would attend their Church, and listen to the instructions I gave.

It had not ceased raining when I returned to my parsonage, and it continued with but little intermission till Church-time, so that there was but a thin congregation. Mrs. Jarrett, however, was there with the two Misses Fry, and staid the Sacrament. There were only thirteen communicants. I spoke to Joseph after Church about his neglect of this important duty, and the necessity there was of preparing his mind. Just before Church in the evening I called at Dilly's to ask whether he wished to have the prayers of the congregation offered for his better state of health. I heard from his wife he was better. Mrs. Jarrett drives him out constantly in her four-wheeled chair, which may be of service to him more than any medicine. I was delivering the message at the door, as I feared there was not sufficient time for me to converse with him before Church. While thus speaking Mrs. Jarrett came out from the room where Dilly (her Butler) was, and begged me to walk in. I then mentioned the object of my coming, and thought it would be a good opportunity to explain my reasons, namely, that it was a benefit to those who were well to pray for the sick, as well as proper for the invalid himself; that in country parishes this ancient custom of praying for the sick was much neglected, but I felt anxious that it should be restored. Mrs. Jarrett said when she was ill she should have had it done herself, but thought the people would have said the rich may be prayed for, but the poor have nothing done for them. I did not exactly see the force of her ladyship's meaning, since it was as much open to the poor as to the rich. I said, if a few of the more respectable people in the parish requested the prayers of the congregation it would become general. Mrs. Jarrett then said she was sorry to see so few communicants; the greater part of them, she remarked, were her own servants—only three men, Smallcombe, her footman, and the clerk. I said she could not possibly regret it more than I did, and had mentioned it over and over again, and lent books and explained the subject to the people. She then began to ask me how I was, as she had heard I had not been well. I said that I had suffered with an oppression on my lungs, and cough, but it was better; indeed, that I felt very grateful that I was able to go through the service in the manner I had done. The lady then began to compliment me on my voice, saying it was as *clear as a bell,* and wondered that I had not been a *good singer.* Without exception this is the most extraordinary personage I have ever met with. On my wishing her a good morning, she held out her hand as if we had been the most cordial friends in existence. I promised Dilly's wife I would spend a quiet half-hour with her husband before I went to Bath on Tuesday.

During the evening service there was a christening; neither of the godfathers had any idea of the responses they were to make. The clerk put a book in the hands of one of the men, but he could not find the place, so I was obliged to answer for them, or rather put into their mouths what they were to say. During the christening the girl Somer, whose mother I had given a caution to about dressing in so improper a manner for one in her station, was close to me with two or three girls dressed in the same flashy manner, who looked everything but what they ought to be.

One of them began laughing when I read the service, and I reproved her; no churchwarden attends. I will speak to my servant Heal; I can insist on his attending Church at least once a day. Things are come to a sad state, and it proceeds from the total unconcern of the superior orders to religion; but this cement, once taken away from the building of the Constitution, it will soon sink under its own weight. This sentiment I wonder how often I have had occasion to repeat during my Journals, but indeed it is uppermost in my mind. After dinner I had some conversation with Joseph about the nature and full meaning of the Sacrament, and the danger those were in who lived unprepared.

Monday, April 12.

When I rose this morning I felt quite overcome and exhausted through my exertions of yesterday. I may say that Sunday is to me a day of painful irritation; I strive to prevent feeling on the occasion, but find it impossible.

I visited Dilly, and read prayers to him. I do not think, poor man, there is any possibility of his recovery. Curtis, the apothecary, says it is a liver complaint, and that he has been a hard drinker. I never knew this, and perhaps it is not true.

I was occupied in my study the whole evening. I had rather at any time have a good book for my companion than a titled fool, and I can far better please myself in my study than in a drawing-room of a Duke—if the company were so frivolous and uninformed as they generally are.

Tuesday, April 13.

About the middle of the day I mounted my horse; Joseph accompanied me. We arrived at my Mother's a little before three. We did not dine at Burrard's till nearly six. On going there I met Warner, whose manner I thought constrained and, if I am any Lavaterist, deceitful. This man I never depended on; but that I should find my friend Burrard altered, which indeed he was, gave me a pang. I have known him ever since he was a child, and have always looked upon him as a steady friend.

I spent an uncomfortable evening, and what was worse walked to my Mother's in the night air, for Burrard's servants seemed so much engaged that I did not like to ask one of them to call me a hackney coach, or, as they term it in Bath, a fly!

Wednesday, April 14.

I was much worried by these things when I returned to my Mother's, and to-day, after dinner, entered more warmly into a conversation which began in trifles than I ought to have done, and the irritation continued, for

Joseph continued the conversation as we rode homewards, and told me that I had taken a pack of fancies into my head without any foundation; although people did say queer things of me it was true, and not without reason. When I asked him to explain what he meant, and that it was the duty of a son to acquaint his Father of whatever was said to his disadvantage, in order to give him an opportunity of meeting his adversaries, he then said I had no adversaries but in my own imagination: that I treated my children like servants and not sons: that Mrs. Jarrett he thought a very civil, good sort of woman, and that I was to blame in not behaving in a more neighbourly manner to her. As I found that this kind of conversation only contributed to excite the irritation I wished to get rid of, I rode on, leaving Joseph behind!

Sunday, April 18.

As I heard during the morning that the colliers had it in contemplation to strike work on account of their wages being about to be lowered, I spoke to one of the colliers, and said if they had any just ground for complaint how much better it would be to send two or three whom they might depend on to state their grievances, and if there was any foundation for them I had no doubt but they would be attended to; but if they struck work it would only be taking bread out of their own mouths and the mouths of their families. The man said he thought with me on the subject, and that they would get no good by opposition. It is now six or seven years ago that there was a combination among the colliers, and the Camerton people struck with the rest and did not work for several days. I then went to them and gave them the same advice, which they would not listen to then, but afterwards told me they wished they had done so, as they were influenced by other people, having nothing really to complain of themselves.

I called at the Manor House. Mrs. Jarrett entered into a long account of the intended opposition of the colliers to their employers. She said it was only for the matter of about £30 that they made all this fuss, for it would not be more if the person who rose the steam was continued instead of dispensed with, and that this was the reason they felt dissatisfied; that the Proprietors of the Works knew nothing about the management of them themselves; that she had desired that things might go on as heretofore till the meeting of the Coal Proprietors, and would pay out of her own pocket the wages of the steam man. I had never understood that there had been any dispute about the steam man, but only heard they objected to a diminution of their wages. What authority Mrs. Jarrett had to interfere with the management of the works is another question. She has only a free share; but this politic lady has one thing which gives her the fullest power over the men, and which, if the Proprietors ever come to open contest with her, they will find to their cost, renders her power absolute. She has authority over the residences of all the colliers, who are only weekly tenants, and may be dismissed ad libitum.

Monday, April 19.

I walked towards the middle of the day into the village, as I understood that the colliers had struck work, not on account of the steam man being taken away, but because some of them were lowered 3*s*. a week in their pay, which they said they could not afford, as most of them had to pay £5 or guineas for the hire of their houses, and sometimes they did not work above four days in the week. I said I was sure if this was properly represented to the Proprietors by two or three of the men, and if on examination they found it true, they would not persevere in the measure; that it was not their interest to have the men work for sums on which they could not live; that I should recommend their deputing three of the most intelligent men to see the Proprietors before they came on Wednesday to Camerton. It would not do to meet them, as I heard them say, in a full body, for that would have a mutinous appearance, and nothing was ever got by that. The men were very civil, for I spoke to no less than three sets of them to this effect, but they said that it would be difficult to find any to go on the mission, as the masters had determined, they said, to turn the people out who should venture to speak to them on anything of the kind, and would first be dismissed from their works. I know there are some artful, ill-disposed fellows among the colliers, but there are also others who will suffer beyond bearing if the three shillings a week are taken from their scanty pay.

I was occupied in my study the whole evening in writing some lines on the state of the times. Should they be read fifty years hence, they will shew at least that I was fully aware of the storm which was coming. The King's health, if it should terminate fatally, will perhaps accelerate the ruin. God's will be done.

Tuesday, May 11.

My Mother arrived at the Parsonage a little after ten, and I was engaged with her nearly the whole morning. We walked before dinner to the Church. I have not seen my Mother looking better, or apparently so well able to walk and exert herself for years. She is now 77, and may perhaps *outlive me,* who this day number 58 years. I feel certain indications which warn me not to expect a long life, and I am sure I do not desire it. We passed a pleasant day, and my family left me after tea to return to Bath, when I went into my study and wrote up my Journal till the present time. If I live till September I shall have held this Rectory 30 years. Servus indignus servorum; but perhaps when I am gone some of my parishioners may wish I had stayed a little longer with them.

Saturday, June 5.

Having a few days before seen Mrs. Jarrett's Butler looking wretchedly [ill], I went immediately to Dilly's, as I heard the poor fellow was dying! Mrs. Jarrett and Miss Fry were with him, fanning his face and giving him salts to smell to. Mrs. Jarrett said she had been with him nearly the whole day. I read to him the more important prayers appointed for the Visitation of the Sick, and wished to converse with him a little, but he complained so much of exhaustion that I desisted.

Monday, June 7.

I rose soon after six. I then went to enquire after Mrs. Dilly, having heard that her husband quitted this world, I hope for a better, early this morning. The poor woman is quite stupefied by the shock, and will not quit the body for an instant. I perceived that I could be of no assistance.

Tuesday, June 15.

The post brought me a letter from the kind-hearted Bishop, saying as he had heard nothing from Lord Hill,[1] he had called again upon Greenwood, and he thought something might be done for Joseph through Lord Fitzroy Somerset.[2]

The funeral of poor Dilly took place about the middle of the day. Mrs. Jarrett sent to say she should be glad to see me at her house previous to the commencement of the service. I walked thither. Stephen Jarrett came to meet me in the hall, and extended his hand with a shew of great cordiality; I never retain hostile feelings beyond the excitement of the moment, and immediately gave him mine, and was also received in the same way by Mr. John Jarrett. There is a pleasing consciousness in having acted rightly which is gratified by such a tribute, though it comes late. How much more comfortable would Mrs. Jarrett have been at Camerton had she not suffered herself to be deceived, and instead of increasing her darling authority and adding to her power by opposing the clergyman she would have done far better to ensure it by making him her friend.

Some conversation was entered into respecting the building a new mansion. I ventured to repeat an opinion I before gave, that at the expense of £6,000 and the old material the same might be done, and there would not be any occasion to employ a London architect. Notwithstanding all this talk about it, I still have my doubts whether any such thing is in actual contemplation. Mrs. Jarrett said it was impossible to live in the old house; I say with Burchell, "Fudge."

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[1] Commander-in-Chief.

[2] Afterwards Lord Raglan.

Saturday, June 19.

After dinner we walked to the canal, my sons wishing to sail in the boat, as the wind blew fresh; they amused themselves awhile. As Anna and myself were returning home by Colliers Row, a stone was thrown at me from the end house, where Goold lives; it could have been no other, as the stone came from that direction. There is really not a day passes over my head but I meet with some fresh insult.

Sunday, June 27.

I had to marry a couple at half-past eight; the bride was as round as a barrel, and according to custom, I suppose there will be a christening in the course of the honeymoon. On my return from the wedding, Mrs. Jarrett's footman brought me her paper, mentioning the death of the King; it seems he departed on Saturday morning; if the storm was so violent at the time of his death as it was here in the evening, the oppression of the atmosphere might have accelerated his transition.

Sunday, July 4.

A letter came from the Bishop, and enclosing a letter from Lord Hill in reply to his, wherein he says he has established as a rule not to admit any youths more than can be helped into the Army above the age of nineteen, so all hope from that quarter fails: still under present circumstances *it may be for the best*: for if Joseph were to abuse his superior officers in the manner he has done his Father, he would be called to a court martial, and turned out with disgrace! Time, I hope, will work a change in his conduct; indeed, it is my most anxious wish that he should get some employment from home, but I know not how to procure any for him; and unless he thoroughly establishes his principles ere he launches into life, he cannot succeed in any profession.

Thursday, July 15.

Mrs. Jarrett sent me twenty-four volumes of books of light reading, but they are sad, mawkish stuff.

We had scarcely finished dinner when I heard a peal from the Church strike out. This rather surprised me, as no one had asked for the key of the Church, and I had told the ringers they should not have it without my leave, since a pack of collier lads got together to ring only for the sake of drinking afterwards. On going to the Church, they said they rang for the King and had no occasion to ask my leave: that other Churches were ringing and they did not see why they should not do as the rest did. I said that if they had asked me properly for the key to toll for the King, who was to be buried this evening, I should have let them have it; but they had got it without my leave. They said it was false, they had not gotten the key; they found the Church open and had gone in.

My sons came from Bath after tea, and say that the shops were shut up, and the bells tolling: I also heard some bells tolling, I believe Farmborough or Priston, but I heard no such peal ringing as the worthies of Camerton chose to exhibit in honour of our deceased Sovereign who was, they said, a very good sort of man and did all he could for poor people, and it became poor men to shew all honour to him: that notwithstanding I had said I did not care for the King, *they did care!* Thus was the memory of the late King attempted to be honoured and his worth recorded by the Camerton Colliers.

These memoranda will shew what was the situation of a Clergyman in the midst of his parishioners in the year 1830. I often think, notwithstanding my bodily ailments, etc., that I shall not die on a bed of sickness, but taken off by some act of violence!

Saturday, July 17.

I wrote the following lines in the evening on the death of George IV. Comparisons are odious, but he never was nor will be regretted by reasonable men, as was his father, whom all adored, whom all agreed in esteeming him an honest man.

In obitum altissimi
Olim principis,
Sed nunc humillimi.

GEORGII QUARTI

When George the Third was on his bier
Britannia shed a filial tear;
When George the Fourth lay lately dead
We did not see one tear she shed;
Perhaps she wip't it ere it fell.
And if she did it was as well.
But she might weep for common weal,
And for that wound no time can heal,
That festering wound which feeds her pain,
And sings his dirge this doleful strain.

I see by the papers that all the world were interested, not only in the funeral but in the particular description of it. As people decline in manly sentiment and in simplicity, an insatiable curiosity is increased and encouraged, and it must be fed by offal. The papers are filled even to nausea with minute particulars of rapes, adulteries, intrigues of actresses, the dialogues between hardened culprits and would-be witty magistrates. Ideas are communicated through the medium of our nasty newspapers throughout the kingdom, with which the purer minds of their grandmothers were wholly unacquainted, but according to the *march of intellect* they were but ill-acquainted with, or in other words had no knowledge of, the world. This is the picture of the English people; alas! if they needed no other witness against their manners and conversation their own newspapers would condemn them. If such nastiness was not grateful to the palate of my countrymen, it would cease to be administered in such copious doses.

Sunday, July 18.

I prepared a sermon on the Gospel for the day, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees." There were very few at Church in the morning, as it rained hard. Mrs. Dilly told me yesterday she had received a summons to go immediately to Mrs. Jarrett, who is staying at her son's near Salisbury, in order to attend her, as she is *dangerously ill,* and that Mrs. Gooch was gone to her mother. If she is really ill I am really sorry for her, and I sincerely hope her illness will conduce to her amendment, and that she will, if she be permitted to live longer on earth, take a new course, for artful and deceitful ways cannot be pleasing in the sight of that Being Who knoweth everything.

How little do we know what an instant may bring forth? I had written thus far in my study after tea, and felt that I did wrong to indulge such a strain of ideas, for God brings about His purposes. The person I thought, and perhaps unjustly suspected, to do me disservice was at that time *dead*! A note from Mr. John Jarrett who is just arrived at Camerton informed me that his Mother died this morning at 9 o'clock at his house near Salisbury, and he was come on business—I suppose respecting the funeral, etc., etc. Why do we feel anxious about second causes? God is all in all; the agency of secondary persons ought never to have had any weight on my mind. Great God forgive me; I will strive to be more resigned, and wait what is intended for me; if I am surrounded with difficulties and dangers, yet Thou canst in an instant deliver me. I wrote to Mr. Jarrett saying if he thought my being with him could be of the least comfort I would either come this evening or to-morrow morning. Mrs. Dilly, who came back with Mr. Jarrett, says her mistress died without any pain, from exhaustion.

Monday, July 19.

I called on Mr. Jarrett after breakfast, and tendered my services. He said he was well aware of my sincerity, and knew how to appreciate it; that he did not know whether his Mother was to be buried at Camerton till he had seen the Will; that although differences had occurred between others and myself it should be his just wish and endeavour to guard against them. I said that I never had any object in view but the welfare of my parishioners, therefore I could with confidence look forward to his co-operation with me. He seemed really to speak from the heart, and if he comes to reside among us, as I hope he will, he may both see and act for himself, and he will ever find me ready to render every assistance in my power.

I had a visit from the poor dumb collier, Clarke. The poor fellow lost his wife in childbed this morning, and I fear she was not properly taken care of. The man seems the picture of misery; indeed, to him it is a wreck. He was induced, however, to make a meal, and seemed recruited by it.

Saturday, July 24.

I got a letter from John Jarrett saying he had fixed Tuesday, half-past two, for the interment of his Mother, who is to be brought out of Wiltshire. The poor dumb woman will be buried in the evening of the same day. Via una cogimur.

How have all my unpleasant feelings against this once despotic Lady of the Manor subsided! I forget all that gave me pain, and now only think of her good qualities and charitable deeds; may they be her advocates and plead for her before the throne of mercy. Charity covereth a multitude of sins.

We walked after prayers to the house of the dumb woman who died in childbed. Mrs. Bush, her neighbour, says no one was with her at the time of her delivery, and that the child was born, and not being properly taken care of she bled to death. Poor Mrs. Jarrett! nearly the last conversation I had with her was endeavouring to make an arrangement by subscription to have a medical person instead of an ignorant female to attend them in difficult cases.

Tuesday, July 27.

This being the day for Mrs. Jarrett's funeral, I went to the Manor House at two o'clock and was shewn into the parlour where Mr. Fry, her lawyer, was sitting. He began to lament the loss he had sustained, in common with the rest of the dependants on the deceased, and I doubt not he spoke with sincerity, for she was a very steady friend to himself in particular. The corpse was brought to the Manor House from Warminster, and placed in the hall, where all the servants assembled round it, and while they were thus engaged in lamenting their mistress poor old Mrs. Anne Stephens, the aunt of the deceased, arrived from Bath. She is upwards of 85 and, I understand, was much affected. About three Mr. Gooch and Mr. Stephen Jarrett coming into the parlour, I shook hands very cordially [with them]; Stephen was in tears, and I really felt for them all as though they had been my relations. How trifling are all our little heartburnings and differences when we see the cause which excited them humbled in the dust, and are well assured we shall shortly ourselves be tenants of the grave. I felt much during the service, but was able to read it with composure. All the farmers attended, as did Mrs. Gooch, Mrs. John Jarrett, Mrs. Anne Stephens, and all the female servants. The body was interred in the vault, or rather at the bottom of the stone steps leading to it, as there was no room beyond, and the Carew vault had been walled up. I suppose there could not have been less than 300 people assembled in the churchyard, and the Church was crowded to excess. I did not go to the Manor House after the ceremony, but took leave of the family before they left the pew. I strolled about the premises in the evening, and was not sorry to retire to rest immediately after the prayers.

The poor dumb woman, I forgot to say, was interred between eight and nine o'clock, and the child of which she was delivered named, as they thought it would die.

Sunday, August 1.

I rose before six to finish my sermon, or rather correct what I have written on the death of Mrs. Jarrett. The Church, as I expected, was crowded to excess and the people were very attentive, so that not a whisper was heard among them. I hope what I said, which was meant for the best, will produce some good effect on the living; the *dead,* whom the large congregation was designed to honour, cannot be profited.

Monday, August 2.

I forgot to mention that the day after the funeral Mr. John Jarrett sent me enclosed in a polite note £15 as a remuneration for my services. I wrote in reply saying that it was far beyond what I had any expectation of, neither had I wished any such. This unexpectedly procured money I gave to my children, £10 to Owen to pay for his illness to Norman, etc., etc., and £5 between Joseph and Anna.

Joseph has good natural talents for drawing, which he might cultivate with success if he chose; I would readily pay for his learning to paint in oils hereafter of Benjamin Barker, but this profession of an artist is infra dig., and our gaily dressed ensigns and lieutenants look down on all as beneath their notice who have not the permission to be shot through the head as they have, which permission is to be purchased at an extravagant rate by their unfortunate fathers and relatives.

Monday, August 9.

About the middle of the day, a footman of the late Mrs. Jarrett's called at the Parsonage and said he had ill news to tell me; that some people had broken into the Church and had stolen all the black cloth with which the pews and the pulpit were hung on account of Mrs. Jarrett's funeral; every article of black cloth is stripped from the three pews, the reading desk, and the pulpit to the value of thirty or forty pounds. I said I was sorry to hear anyone could be so wicked as to commit sacrilege of this kind. I would give half-a-guinea to anyone who would trace the fact to the offender.

Wednesday, August 11.

The papers retail the Insurrection in France, and the impunity which attends it, and may excite much disturbance in Spain, Germany, Prussia, and perhaps Russia. Kings are out of fashion, and all authority is now kicked against, unless it proceeds from the People. What I have seen of the People does not impress me with high ideas either of their principles or their practice. I shall not change; I am too old to bend, so if they strain me I must break.

Tuesday, August 31.

As we purposed to reach Bristol, being under the escort of Mr. Richardson who had business there in the evening, and is acquainted with every part of this vast and dirty city, I did not wish to interfere as to our station for the night, but only requested we should take up with cleanly quarters if possible. The first inn we asked to be accommodated at was without success, as we had the mortification to find the morrow was the first day of Bristol Fair. At the second inn we stopped, they agreed to give us beds, but alas! I had reason to regret that which fell to my share, as it was so abundant in vermin I could not close my eyes till their supper was concluded; and as soon as it was properly light I was glad to leave my bed and wash off as much as possible the pollutions to which I had been subject during the night.

Saturday, September 4.

I was occupied in the evening preparing my sermons. I purpose preaching on the duty of returning thanks to God after any deliverance from danger, and I hope this will become more general; indeed, I shall have a good opportunity, as the child I sent to the hospital of the name of Willcox is returned in a good state of health, having been cleansed of the leprosy, and a notice is sent of thanksgiving.

Monday, September 6.

We had nearly done breakfast when a servant of the Bishop's arrived at the Parsonage, saying his Master would soon be with us to breakfast and with a party of ladies; and by nine he arrived with the three Miss Laws and their brother, the family of the late Lord Ellenborough. The two elder ladies seem to be well-informed women and have made proper observations during their travels abroad. The youngest is very handsome; and so I think Mr. Law would generally be considered, as is his brother the present Lord Ellenborough.

I have engaged to visit the Bishop at Weston-super-Mare.

Tuesday, September 7.

I received by the post to-day a letter from the Bishop, which ought to have arrived yesterday, but that would have been too late to announce his intended visit; he is indeed a kind-hearted man, and if he had only been a brother Clergyman residing in the neighbourhood, it would have given me pleasure always to have received him; but as a superior from whom I have received so many proofs of kindness and hospitality, it is a delight to me to make any returns in my power.

I feel every kind attention from my superiors in rank: I accept their attentions with gratitude. I ask no pre-eminence, I seek no honours: ambition and pride, if ever I entertained such guests, they have long since deserted me. I am more and more inclined to anchor my frail and more than half-decayed bark in this its anchoring place, and lay its timbers where it is in port. How my log-book of life lengthens as I approach nearer the termination of my Voyage; I get more and more weary of common topics, yet I am only high-minded in one particular, which is to court the converse of purer spirits, and to endeavour to avoid everything which will estrange my mind from such communion when I hold converse with my own heart as I do now in my chamber and am still.

Wednesday, September 8.

There was a wedding in the morning, and as it appeared to be one comme il faut I gave the bride the fees to buy her some tea-things. Soon after it was concluded I left the Parsonage with my son and daughter on a visit to Mr. Richardson at Farleigh Hungerford. In our way we stopped at a nursery garden, and I ordered some apple and peach trees for my garden, and a particular kind of pea called the Tamarind Pea, which is so productive that the crop continues to return its produce the whole summer.

Monday, September 20.

After dinner some conversation took place about a trifle, between my daughter and myself; her brother Owen took her part and it ended in just such a scene as has been before acted: everything that could be said or done to irritate me my son employed, and unfortunately succeeded; but I told him as I had been obliged to separate from his brother on that account, so I should from him. He said he would readily leave me if I would give him the money to take his degree, but if I did not he would continue in my house, as he had a right to do, and if I used any force to expel him he would use force to force, and he broke one of the parlour chairs as a foretaste of what I was to expect! I said that his conduct had shewn him so complete and so callous a villain that when he left my roof I should feel relieved of a heavy load. "You are a damned liar to call me a villain," he replied. "Who cares for such a Father? I despise you from my heart."

Doubtful of my ability to restrain tears if this scene continued, I told my son I would let him have £300, but I should expect an acknowledgment for this as well as for the other I had advanced on this condition. He said he would do so and should be glad to quit my house, and never see my face again. He and his sister chose to go to bed before Prayers. I read to the servants, and with a heavy heart retired to bed but not to rest.

No one, excepting my brother who transcribes this, will read the sad recital. When I am dead and fifty years have passed over my grave, and when this base and ungrateful son has finished his career, someone who peruses my Journals will read this as they would a novel, and think the recital has been heightened through feelings wounded almost to a pitch of madness, but this is not the case. The feeling I experience is not revenge, it is sorrow: let me not bear it long, O God: forgive him, change his mind, punish him by those chastisements which may conduce to his reformation. Oh! my God! support my mind on this trying occasion. . . .

I am astonished to see how much I have written, but I know not what I write. . . . Oh, let me be tranquil. . . . I am not angry, I feel too much. I can bear all the malignant world can say or do, but my sons and my daughter, those I have fostered and loved: let my sufferings tend to my future patience, let me submit and kiss the rod! I can do no more.

Tuesday, September 21.

I left Owen and his sister to breakfast in the parlour, and had some tea sent up into my study: I could not eat anything the whole day and went to bed early.

Wednesday, September 22.

When I was in the greatest distress imaginable yesterday, Owen was amusing himself with his lathe, and my daughter in her usual occupations. I attribute a great deal of the misery I experience to sending my sons to Winchester College, where they were educated. During the time of their abode there the boys were two or three times in a state of rebellion against their masters, and brought the same feelings home with them against their parent whenever he ventured to say anything or do anything which seemed to trench on their natural liberty. Joseph when at Sandhurst, after leaving Winchester, was put into the black hole, the severest punishment they have for insolence and disobedience, and Colonel Butler afterwards wrote in such strong terms I perceived there was no chance of his getting a Commission from thence, and so after the expenditure of £400 for two years, I took him away; and now he is an idler with little chance of getting employment. Owen is equally idle. And what is my daughter bringing upon herself by her ungrateful conduct? She has identified herself in the rebellion of her brothers against their Father: I never saw so great an obstinacy in anyone as in this deluded girl. She was perfectly mistress of my house, and all the money went through her hands; she had a horse to ride, and a carriage to drive in: she was everywhere received as the mistress of my house and was as independent as if she had been so. She is now going to my Mother, where she will in fact be little better than what is called a companion to an old lady. Alas! these are indeed sad times: the domestic fireside will be no longer known, or its comforts experienced: I shall be left alone through the dreary winter without a single person whom I can speak to: and why? because after all I have done for my children they have no affection for me: but I shall not be alone; I shall have books to occupy my time: God will be with me.

Thursday, September 23.

My daughter came before dinner and said she was very sorry for the uneasiness she had given me, and hoped I would pass it over; and that with respect to Owen, as the dispute began with her she hoped I would not think of it any more.

I said I knew my infirmity, and all I could do was to keep out of the way of those who would purposely provoke me; and was it not their duty to put up with a few angry words spoken in the heat of the moment: that when I spoke to my children about anything, let the fault be ever so trivial, they always answered me in such a manner as to make me angry. If Owen had anything to say in extenuation of such conduct, or to promise that it should not be repeated, I was ready to listen to him, and to forgive him as I had done her.

I desired Anna that she would tell her brother I wished to see him for a few minutes in my study.

On his coming into the room I perceived no very promising omen from his countenance that there would be an accommodation.

I said, " I have received a note from Mr. Hoare saying the £300 is paid into their hands, therefore there is no obstacle to your leaving this house according to the conditions: that the money be applied for the purpose of taking your degree: it will be the last sum you will receive during my life. When I am dead you will be entitled to an equal share with your brother and sister. I do not, cannot look unmoved at your present situation; you have risen in open rebellion against your Father. Had you, instead of irritating, endeavoured to conciliate, would these epithets, with which you are so grievously offended, have been applied to you? "

He said he never would condescend to soothe anyone, or to bend to any; that this was not his disposition, and he could not help that more than I could help being angry. I said did he reckon Duty nothing, Religion nothing: that a mild answer turneth away wrath: had this ever been tried? Ought he not, as my son, to bear with me for a few minutes and to endeavour by a little conciliation to prevent my saying what my own mind could not approve of; words hastily employed, although his own conscience must tell him not without some foundation for the application. When I was angry I knew I was in fault; if I could overcome this feeling, no exertion should be spared.

These were the principal arguments I used in my conversation, which lasted nearly an hour. My son was melted and promised that he would use his utmost endeavour to make me comfortable.

I went down to dinner in the parlour with Owen and Anna, and to bed before the evening shut in.

Friday, September 24.

Mrs. Trew, the schoolmistress whom I called upon, complained to me of the conduct of the children, saying they behaved so badly she did not know what to do with them, and begged I would give them a public reproof. I hear sad accounts of some of the girls who were educated at the school, who are become common prostitutes: as soon as they go to Bath they are spoiled.

Saturday, September 25.

As Owen wishes to have a place for his lathe which is now in the greenhouse, I have promised to fit him up a place, and it shall be done directly; any pursuit which will occupy his attention and divert his mind I will make a point of encouraging. His sister has many pursuits: drawing, music, gardening, and rearing poultry, besides working and attending to the concerns of the family. I have gotten some more geranium plants so that her greenhouse may be filled this winter.

Sunday, September 26.

I spoke to the school children according to the request of the Schoolmistress, and after Church I repeated my admonition. Young Harris, who is now a mason, behaved so badly in Church I was obliged to speak to him, and on leaving the Church, I saw written upon the wall of the Church porch the same obscenity that this boy once wrote on the door of my orchard, so I am inclined to think the hardened wretch did it because I reproved him for his misbehaviour. It were better far that the lower orders knew nothing about writing if they produce such fruits as these.

I got a very kind and affectionate letter from my Mother in reply to that I sent her when my children had thoughts of leaving my house. Poor woman! she has a most feeling heart. What a state is Society arrived at: had I known what was about to take place I would have sent my sons as apprentices to some honest occupation wherein they might have procured their bread, instead of squandering hundreds to enable them to associate at college with unprincipled rakes, free thinkers, and gamesters, and return home to abuse their Father, and pine in secret because the hour of his dissolution is protracted.

Tuesday, September 28.

I was engaged to visit the Bishop at Weston-super-Mare this day; Owen refused to accompany me. I left home at ten o'clock and drove through Cheddar Cliffs, as I needed some change of scene to change my ideas. I wrote to Owen from thence, as I found I had brought the key of the wine cellar with me, and knew he would be displeased at the privation, and construe it into a premeditated neglect. I desired he would procure some wine from Bath or the vicinity. My horse I baited at the little inn at Cheddar. Having quitted Cheddar in a heavy storm of rain, and driven through Axbridge Cross, I fell in with a troop of gypsies who had a train of donkies carrying their baggage before them; in an instant the wheels of a carriage sounded in my rear, and having the umbrella over my head held by the right hand, and the reins in the left, I was not so active in getting out of the way as I might have been: indeed, the postillion who drove the horses had himself taken the middle of the road to avoid the donkies, and was close behind me ere I perceived him, and not being able to hold them in, ran against the hind wheel of my light phaeton and overset it with a crash! sending me headlong into the middle of the road, where I lay for an instant on my back, quite stunned.

On recovering my legs the first feeling was that of anger against the awkward fellow who had occasioned my degradation, but lo and behold! on looking into the carriage I found it was the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

After congratulations and explanations he took me into his carriage to Weston-super-Mare; my own having been refitted by an active gipsy man, his servant drove it to the end of the journey, so out of evil came good. On arriving at his lodgings, Claremont Lodge, close to the sea, I had some refreshing tea and was not sorry to go early to bed.

Wednesday, September 29.

Mr. Barlow, the Rector of Weston, dined with us, and we had some interesting conversation in the evening. As the moon was in her full glory, we accompanied him along the beach part of the way to his parsonage.

Thursday, September 30.

As the morning was everything which could be desired in respect to clearness for the prospect we determined to ascend to the Camp on the summit of Brent Knoll.

I cannot omit a circumstance which occurred when I was walking through the village of South Brent which was gratifying to my feelings. The Bishop had been enquiring of a couple of old men respecting the present Curate of the Parish, and whether the Church was well attended, etc., etc. After he had done, I asked whether they remembered a curate of the name of Skinner some thirty years ago. They both replied in the affirmative, and said they never had one they liked so well when with them, and felt so much for when he went away: that they had talked of him and his kindness to the poor. When I made myself known to them, they both shook me by the hand, and one of them said he hoped I should preach to them next Sunday as he wished to hear me again before he died.

This was not acting in the men, for they did not know me or the Bishop in the first instance, but entered into conversation with us as strangers passing through the parish, for the Bishop had left his carriage at the Vicarage.

After all the bitter almonds I am constrained to swallow, a sweet nut now and then is grateful.

We drove without stopping back to Weston-super-Mare.

Saturday, October 23.

I understand that Mr. Jarrett has Mr. and Lady Elizabeth Repton staying with him; the latter is daughter to the worthy Earl of Eldon; her husband is, I believe, the celebrated layer-out of grounds whose taste is so much consulted by the great. Perhaps Mr. Jarrett means to consult him respecting the alterations he is about to make at Camerton.

Thursday, October 28.

I paid my respects to Mr. Jarrett and Mr. Repton, and invited the party to dine with us on Monday; the Parishes are to meet them, as are Mr. Hammond and his lady, and Mr. Trelawney Collins.

Mr. Jarrett introduced Mr. Repton to me; he seems a gentlemanly personage. I suppose it will soon be known whether Mr. Jarrett is to build a new house.

Friday, October 29.

We drove to Timsbury to dine with the Parishes and met a large party: we had music after Tea. Mrs. Parish read Prayers to her household before we retired to rest. I am very glad to see this adopted by the laity.

Monday, November 1.

I spent a restless night, the bile affected my bowels and kept me awake: it is unfortunate that we have company to dinner. I have just given directions for some toast and water to be made and put in a small decanter near me to take it at dinner instead of white wine. I think I can carry off this harmless ruse.

Mr. and Mrs. Hammond, Captain and Mrs. Parish, Mr. and Lady Elizabeth Repton, Mrs. Brooks, Mr. and Mrs. Jarrett, Mr. Trelawney Collins, and Mr. Wickham formed our dinner party.

To prepare an entertainment for so many with our small accommodations, we were obliged to enlarge our table by another flap, which occasioned for our sending for the Carpenter. Poor Anna was destined to feel many mortifications, for the pastry and good things she had prepared were burnt by the inattention of the cook, for she, I hear, did everything to shew her malevolence at a time when it might be most felt. We were obliged to have servants from the Jarretts' to wait (three men), to borrow some of their silver forks and spoons; we were moreover indebted to them for a hare and pheasant and grapes for the dessert, and also to their housekeeper supplying the deficiency in the pastry. How much better is it to keep a moderate scale instead of aping those other than our set. The Clergy, I think, ought to agree among themselves to break through this sad thraldom; but they will not do this, for Hammond and Collins, I daresay, when we dine with them, will give a greater set-out than we gave. We certainly lose our consequence instead of increasing it by the imitation of the more wealthy in these respects.

After all this, however, we found our Company very pleasant, and disposed themselves to be pleased with our efforts; still they would perhaps have been equally pleased to have taken according to our usual scale of entertainment. O imitatores, servum pecus is a good old adage: those who have something of their own need not stoop to become imitators; but such is now the fashion of the times: hence it is that so little originality is to be seen in Society. We are all become imitators, not only in clothes but in manners and conversation; there is a sameness throughout, that one dinner party is only the counterpart of another.

The evening was spent in looking over the coal fossils, and Shakespere prints by Boydell. Lady Elizabeth Repton seems to inherit her Father's strong sense, if one may judge from casual remarks. Mr. Repton, her husband, is a pleasing, gentlemanly man. I could not eat anything at dinner, and as soon as the party were gone went immediately to bed.

Monday, December 13.

While writing in my study I saw numbers of men, at least fifty, cross the Park in front of my study window to go down to the pits at Camerton. I had learnt that the colliers meant to make a rise. Soon after, I saw this mob proceeding to our pits. I then walked to Clan

Down, having heard that there had been a mob of the colliers assembled there yesterday, and that the Riot Act was read by Mr. James, accompanied by other magistrates; indeed, they told me that some of the Camerton people had joined them, and meant to be there again to-day.

I saw all was quiet on the Down, and the Steam Engine working, as I approached the pit. I walked thither, and found that the Radstock Rioters, for I can call them by no other name, had gone on to Paulton. The people at the pit said they were well satisfied with their wages, but that these fellows from Radstock had ordered them to stop work. I counselled them against cutting the ropes of the pits and the damaging of machinery, etc., and advised them to return to their duty: that there were barges then waiting for their loads. The men said they would load the barges, and should not stop work: that they had nothing to complain of, only that they thought the small coal landed ought to be paid for as well as the large coal, since they procured one as well as the other. I said that this ought to be a consideration with their masters: if they considered the demand just, I made no doubt they would allow it: it were far better not to be moved by the multitude to do evil, but if they had any just complaints to petition their employers to remove them, but never attempt to drive them by force to comply with their demands, for whatever was extorted by compulsion would never be lasting: that there was no distress among them was sufficiently proved by the increased number of public houses: if men were in want of food, they could not support the trade of *eleven* public houses, instead of *three*: if they could find money to spend in the numerous Ale Houses, and to buy of all the pedlars and hucksters who were daily coming into the Parish, they could not complain of distress.

Friday, December 31.

N.B.—I have looked over the memoranda of some of the last years of my life, but I have never seen the prospect so gloomy as it is at present. I only pray for strength to perform the last concluding scene of my life with decency, and prove at least I have not myself been affected by the degenerate practice of the times.

I am strongly assailed both at home and abroad, for my children will not listen to reproof, and where it fails to produce a good effect it hardens the heart, and makes it worse rather than better. . . . Everything seems tottering around me!

1831

Saturday, January 1, 1831.

THE beginning of a New Year makes a pause between measured and numbered strides we each of us take towards the grave; nearly 59 of these strides have I been permitted to take from my cradle; how many more remain to be taken to the end of my pilgrimage that Being alone can determine Who gave me existence. There is nothing in this world which can induce me to ask for a protracted course; as soon as the period of my probation be complete, and my warfare be accomplished, I am prepared to go hence, and shall not for a moment regret what I leave behind me.

Wednesday, January 5.

I was occupied in arranging the drawings for my Journals. It gives me some pleasure to perceive the energies of my mind do not decay, and that I am able to perform as much, nay even more, than I could do in the prime of life.

I am ready to continue on my station as long as my Great Commander orders me to do so. At the commencement of a New Year I make this introduction to my Journal under a kind of presentiment I shall not live to complete another annual register.

Sunday, January 9.

I read prayers in the morning to a thin congregation: the cold weather seems to make devotion cold; I cannot increase the warmth, although I feel it myself and it consumes me.

Tuesday, January 11.

I walked with Anna to Braysdown, and heard a sad account of old Swift and his wife. On visiting their cottage a most distressing scene presented itself; never have I seen a greater picture of misery. Our Overseer has not been near them. The woman is the granddaughter of a clergyman, is upwards of 80; the husband I believe older; they have no one to assist them, both being so infirm they cannot assist themselves. They lived as servants to that wretched miser and magistrate, Purnell of Woodborough, who had the villainy last Easter to blame the parish officers for allowing these old people 2*s*. 6*d*. each, and desired them to take off 1*s*. from their allowance, when he himself had, by advancing sums for their support, bought the house they dwell in, and which through his permission they had erected on the waste adjoining his estate.

If there is any crime which calls upon the Almighty for His vengeance it is surely this of oppressing the poor. I left half-a-crown with the poor man in order that a proper person should be paid to attend upon his wife, who is at times delirious, and I procured a prayer-book from a neighbouring house and read to the old woman, and afterwards returned home with my daughter. These are sad scenes for young people just entering life to witness, but it is necessary they should witness the sufferings of others, for God alone knows what they will be exposed to themselves.

Tuesday, January 25.

I wrote the annexed letter to Mr. Purnell, the magistrate. I thought it my duty to speak to him in strong terms. Here is a copy of the letter as taken by my daughter:

"CAMERTON PARSONAGE,
"*January* 25, 1831.

"SIR,—

"As the Minister of this Parish I have a right to ask whether you can reconcile it to your conscience that your old servant, Swift, and his wife, who have served you and your relatives at Woodborough for nearly 50 years, should die destitute of every comfort, being in more absolute want than any paupers in the place? I could scarcely believe my ears last Easter Vestry, when you desired the parish pay of 5*s*. a week (for two people each more than 80 years of age) should be lowered. For your own sake before you die, Sir, I hope you will think and act differently.

"John Skinner."

Wednesday, February 23.

There was a wedding this morning after the Camerton mode, I find, as the woman has already produced. Hicks the Overseer says she is worse than any of them, having before sworn a child to another man to extort money when she was not with child at all. White, the clerk, after the wedding mentioned another case quite as bad as what Hicks had told me of the girl I had just married, who, by the way, had for *bridemaid* a common prostitute, who was not long since tried for her life for stealing out of a shop in Bath, but her punishment was commuted to imprisonment.

Saturday, February 26.

It was a stormy night. I spent half an hour before breakfast in my study. The papers of to-day speak of an insurrection in Ireland. I am weary of reading the nonsense of the newspapers; the sovereign people are to be pacified with pots and pipes, so the taxes on beer and tobacco are to be lowered; and that they may derive every kind of instruction from the newspapers, part of the tax is to be taken off, which will make them a penny cheaper. Pipes, pots, and papers, and the permission to debate ad libitum the advantages of a republic; what the deuce would they have more! But, joking apart, for indeed it is too serious a matter to joke about, I see no hope of averting the storm which threatens the country, unless by one patriotic effort. If it is calculated that a twentieth part of all the property, landed, funded, and personal, in the kingdom would entirely and completely liquidate the National Debt, let that loss be voluntarily sustained by all who have property, as taxes would for the most part be taken off. Were this done, the income of every individual would be nearly the same as at present; and would any patriot hesitate to part with the twentieth part of his possessions to insure years of comfort and prosperity to his country? I answer, real patriots would not; but shew me the real patriot, and I will call him Phœnix! rara avis in terris indeed. But (alas!), touch my property, touch my life.

Good Friday, April 1.

This being Good Friday, I read the prayers and preached on the text, "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth." Very few were in attendance at Church, as the colliers and agriculturists now work on Good Friday, but I never suffer any of my servants to do so; the times are ripe for punishment.

Easter Sunday, April 3.

I preached in the morning a sermon on the Resurrection, and afterwards administered the Sacrament. Very few attended: only 15, including my own family and servants. That is their fault, not mine. I have done everything to persuade them for their good, itaque liberavi animam meam.

Monday, April 18.

I rose early, then walked into the village before breakfast. Some of the colliers, as I passed the coal pit afterwards, indicated a marked insolence towards myself. I walked after breakfast to attend the sick.

Wednesday, April 20.

Combes mentioned that the brewer, Collins, wanted to have the house he has lately built at Meadgates licensed as an Ale House, should the licence of the beer houses be repealed, and that he had been soliciting the farmers for their votes. I said he would never get mine, I could assure him, as I attributed a great deal of the mischief in the parish to these houses; and I further said that as his (the Camerton Inn) had been established for many years, and I had reason to believe kept good order, that I should not myself consent to another's being opened so near to him.

Friday, April 29.

I buried Clarke, who died suddenly on Sunday at four o'clock. They have it in circulation round the parish that he was struck dead for profaning the sabbath in measuring out the ground for a house he was about to build. If my worthy parishioners never did a worse crime they would at any rate be more pleasant people to live with, but, like the Jews of old, they are ready to accuse even their Divine Teacher of sabbath breaking as the most heinous of all offences. These are the people among whom I dwell.

Saturday, April 30.

After dinner this evening there were lying on the rug before the fire my three dogs and a pet lamb of my daughter's, also a large tom cat, and at the window presented itself a tame jackdaw; all these different creatures were perfectly quiet, and to all appearances good friends. If my son and daughter and myself, perhaps, had left the room for any time the discordant dispositions of these inmates would have produced mischief, since all these creatures are as happy as creatures can be under our protection, and I may ask, were not my fellow creatures far more happy under the protection of their more powerful superiors years ago when the laws were duly executed than they now are amidst that great diversity of parties in religion and politics?

I take no merit to myself for inheriting a little of the old English spirit, as an immediate progenitor of mine, my great, great, and I believe I must add another great, grandfather, Robert Skinner, was a stanch adherent to Charles in his troubles, and did his duty manfully; he that followed his son into exile, returned with him at the Restoration, and died Bishop of Worcester.

Why should I not act upon the same principles as he did when Bishop of Oxford and Worcester, being Rector of Camerton, and be as ready to maintain my principles by my voice and by my writings, and even to die in defence of them if it be required of me? It is easy enough to determine on a stoical behaviour, but it is very difficult to practice it, for I continually meet with insults; nay, the Master I serve is insulted through me, and I long to be removed from this continued state of irritation.

Thursday, June 9.

I rose early, and wrote some of the arrears of my Journals before breakfast: "Nulla dies sine linea" was the motto I assumed when first I began journalising, and I hope I shall adhere to it.

Monday, June 20.

I rose early to write to the Magistrates of the Bath Forum Division respecting the public house Collins wishes to have licensed in the parish, and to express my disapprobation of the increase of these excitements to evil, for I can call them by no other name. I am well aware of the unpopularity I incur, but I am willing to incur it, nay, even insults, rather than sacrifice my principles by calling evil good and good evil for the sake of expediency. The magistrates of Bath are more subservient to the opinions of any Jack-in-Office—their clerk, for example—than it becomes a person to be who has so responsible a duty on themselves to perform. I am convinced that these clerks even direct and lead by the nose their superiors who ought to direct them. There has been a respectable public house established in this parish for upwards of thirty years in the centre of the collieries, now occupied by Combes; a second, called the "Red Post," is on the outskirts of the parish, if not immediately in it; a third was not long since opened in a hamlet in the parish of Camerton, and is within a short distance of that now proposed to be opened. Indeed, the three houses already licensed are within a mile or a mile and a half of each other, and two of them not further distant from the public house in Timsbury parish. Besides these houses we have eight or ten *beer houses,* which I am sorry to say are conducted on a very different plan to what we were given to understand would have been the case in the first instance: being in fact *Ale Houses* in everything but the name. I well know they will attend to their clerk, Mr. Page, rather than to me on the occasion, for now the rabble must be pleased, and the name of Rector in a parish is become an empty and offensive title.

Friday, June 24.

At breakfast time I had some serious conversation with Joseph, and asked whether he was already tired of farming, as he seemed to prefer fishing and swallow shooting to overlooking his men and attending to his business; if he was he might give up the concern altogether, and I would attend to it myself. He said he much wished to continue, and would attend to business; that he was sorry he had been so insolent to me, and begged my pardon.

* * * * *

Thursday, September 14.

I rode with Anna, and called on old Swift and his wife; they are much the same, that is, approaching their long home, but I fear without a proper feeling respecting a future state, but God will never require of them more than the talent He has bestowed.

Some persons are naturally ignorant, and unfeeling even with respect to bodily suffering; the poor woman whose leg is mortifying seems to feel but little.

Friday, October 7.

I spent the morning in my study. At dinner I met with the same kind of improper behaviour from my son Joseph I have been of late so much accustomed to, merely because I hinted he was taking more cider at dinner than would do him good, as he always has his wine after, and, I believe too, something else when he walks up to his farm. Alas! the young men of the present day, instead of exerting themselves to produce fruits for what has been bestowed on their culture, imagine they are to be supported in idleness and extravagance, and to do nothing but eat, drink, sleep, shoot, fish, and ride about the country—being as lordly in their ideas as if they were men of £2,000 a year, instead of having yet their independence to boot.

My death! even this will not put that sum in the pockets of each of my sons. When this is gone—I cannot bear to dwell on the unpleasant anticipation.

Saturday, October 8.

I went to bed much agitated and spent a sleepless night; the pang of ingratitude in one's children more especially bites much deeper than any other venomous tooth.

I did not go down to breakfast. About ten o'clock, however, I left my bedroom. On going into the parlour, Joseph began by saying he was not to blame that I had been in a great passion with him because he had drunk a few glasses of cider; that he had a right to drink as much as he chose as long as he continued in my house, and that it was not behaving like a gentleman to take notice of it. I said if he were in the army, and was taking more wine than would do him good at the mess, the Colonel, or Major, or Superior Officer would be doing a young man a kindness to remark it. He said that if a major or colonel did so to him he would throw a bottle at his head. I said, in my own house and to my own son I had a right to make such remarks, and if he would not submit to hear them he should not stay in my house. His brother Owen then took his part, and said there was a great fuss made about drinking a few glasses of cider; that Joseph had a right to feel offended, since I spoke before the servant. He was then still more abusive than his brother had been, saying that I wanted to get rid of the expense of having Joseph in my house; I also wanted an excuse to stop his allowance after he took his degree, which he is going to Cambridge now to do, and has received £50 from me for the purpose, and therefore had laid the plan of quarrelling with them; that he owed me no obligation whatever for anything he had received at my hands, therefore there was no occasion for gratitude. He said, if I did not continue him an allowance after he had taken his degree he would compel me; he knew enough of the law to be assured that he had the power to make me pay £60 a year to him out of my marriage settlement, and he would make me do it; he hoped God would strike him dead if ever he came into my house again, and he quitted about twelve o'clock. Among the taunts my ungrateful son threw out was this: "I suppose you will put in your Journals what has taken place, and of course make it all your own way; but I don't care, I shall never read it, and whatever you may think of your great collection of MSS. books, everyone, as well as myself, only laughs at your folly in thinking the occurrences of your parish and family events worth reading; and with regard to your poetry, it is merely sing-song! I have written some poetry," he continued, "which is much better than anything you have ever produced." In the course of conversation he said that there never was a good classic who came from a private school—alluding to Cheam, where I was educated under Mr. Gilpin—but that the Winchester men had carried away all the Latin verse prizes.

After Owen was gone I knocked at Anna's door, as she had retired to her room and locked it, and asked her whether she meant to give directions about the rooms being put in order for the reception of our company (the Hoares, from Southfield, who were expected to dinner, and were to spend a few days). She said she had given orders to the servants, and they must do what she ordered; she should not go to look after them, that was not her business. I said, as she did not seem inclined to do as my housekeeper I must resume the office myself, and see the house was put in order for the reception of my friends. I then told her that her conduct was as reprehensible as that of her brothers; that they had insulted me most grossly, and that she had given every countenance to it. She said that I had been put into a great passion for a trifle; if I was angry with them, they had a right to be angry with me. I replied I was ready to acknowledge this weakness: if my children by their insolence endeavoured to move me to anger they were more than half partakers of the transgression. She said it was her duty to love her brothers, and she should do so. I replied I had often forgiven them, but it had only led to a repetition of their ill-behaviour. I should not now forgive them till I found their repentance sincere; that neither of them should again enter my house. She said if they had not permission to come here, she would not herself stay.

Finding that this unfortunate girl had been entirely warped and influenced by her brothers, and knowing I could not command my feelings sufficiently if she misbehaved herself before the company I expected, and feeling also too unwell myself to entertain them properly, I determined to put them off, and therefore wrote to Mr. Hoare saying, as the weather was so unpromising, and owing to something which had occurred to distress me greatly, I hoped he would not be offended if I again put off the day of our meeting at Camerton.

I felt in reality so unwell with the pressure of blood at my temples I was resolved to take some laudanum, and took three times fifteen drops at a time without producing any effect, so that I passed a miserable time in bed.

Sunday, October 9.

As soon as the morning was sufficiently light I dressed myself and went into my study and got some tea, which refreshed me greatly, so that I was able to look over my sermon, which had been prepared before on the text, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." There were but few attended the Church; among the absentees was my son Joseph. Whether he returned from Bath yesterday I know not, neither have I enquired. Anna attended, but I did not think with a countenance which betokened contrition for having acted so ungratefully towards her Father. On returning home I wrote thus far in my Journal. I have written eighteen pages since the morning, my mind quite calm, for which feeling I am indeed most grateful, and may the minds of my children become so sensible of their error that they may return with humility to the improvement of their minds in religious knowledge. Oh God! into Thy good keeping I commit them, as I do myself this night. May I be preserved from future excitements to anger; I will strive to avoid it—indeed, I have striven from my youth up until now: Fas est et ab hoste doceri. Owen said I was a madman, and ought to have a commission of lunacy to investigate my conduct. How could such an idea enter into the head of a son? Although I have sometimes been hurried away by the excitement of anger, never has anger been permitted to engender malice, hatred, or revenge, and as soon as my sons return to themselves again I will forgive them again; but I know it is better to let them feel what it is to lose even for a little the affection and assistance of their best friend. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Monday, October 10.

I have written the account of what took place between my sons and myself. What I have written will do no harm to themselves should they improve and hereafter become useful members of society.

By Will I have bequeathed my Journals to a public institution, that they are not read till fifty years after my death, when most of the characters here drawn, as well as myself, will have retired from this troublesome scene to render up an account of their thoughts, words, and actions, and the use they have made of the talent committed to their charge.

Tuesday, October 11.

Several of the farmers paid tythe this morning at the Parsonage to my daughter, as I was obliged to keep upstairs on account of the medicine. Anna seems determined to give me no further cause of uneasiness, and I trust she will continue to enjoy herself under my roof (where she has as many real comforts as though she were an earl's daughter).

I felt my mind relieved by listening to my daughter's music and singing for an hour before I retired to my study, where I brought up my Journals to this point, and am now going to bed—I hope in peace and harmony with all mankind, since I forgive all as I hope myself to be forgiven.

Wednesday, October 12.

I felt considerably relieved, and got up about ten, having taken my tea in bed. Joseph wrote the following letter:

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"I am very sorry to hear that you have been so unwell as to prevent your receiving your tythe. I shall be most happy to receive it, at Combes's or elsewhere. If I had known it before I should have been most happy to have attended, if you would have allowed me. Of course I am sorry for all that has passed. Be assured that it will be my endeavour to please you for the future. I hope to hear that you are getting better, and can only say how sorry I am at being the cause of such mental and bodily pain to one whom I have always found in essentials a kind friend and affectionate father.

"I remain,
"Your affectionate Son,
"J. H. SKINNER.

"THE GLEBE FARM,
"*Wednesday evening.*"

to which I gave the annexed answer:

"DEAR JOSEPH,

"As I said in my letter yesterday, I forgave as I hope to be forgiven; as you are sensible of your past dereliction of duty towards me, your Father, and on condition of your avoiding the like in future, I will strive to wipe all recollection of the past from my mind.

"I feel much better for the quiet and the mental and medicinal discipline of yesterday, and shall be glad to see you at any time: and hope you will preserve in future the same sentiments you profess to entertain respecting your Father in your letter of to-day, namely, that you have always found him your best friend; and this sentiment of sincere regard towards you I again repeat by signing myself your affectionate Father and sincere well-wisher through life.

"JOHN SKINNER."

Joseph came soon afterwards and repeated what he had before said, namely, that he would endeavour to give me no cause for uneasiness in future.

Tuesday, December 20.

Having to attend a Clerical Meeting at Mells, I drank tea and slept at Mr. Doveton's. Before breakfast I walked round his beautiful domain, nearly half a mile in extent, of shrubberies and plantation. There is not such a rectory in the county; it used to be called a bishoprick when the late incumbent, Dr. Bishop, resided there. It rained the whole way till I reached Camerton.

Saturday, December 31.

Another year has wing'd its airy flight,
Still wrapt the future in mysterious night;
What may the next reveal?

Oh, my God! I will commit myself and all I have into Thy good keeping this night. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be now, and always, acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

1832

Sunday, July 1, 1832.

I ALTERED a sermon I had written and preached when I was ordained priest, on this text: "Seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not." After shewing the necessity there was for those who had engaged in the important office of instructors to declare boldly the doctrines of Christianity and to oppose the iniquity and licentiousness of evil men, even though affliction and persecution might await them for the word's sake, I was well aware that men of little minds and little knowledge not only envied, but misrepresented and calumniated, the instructions bestowed by the regular clergy, and there was no story too gross but what they would receive, no slander too iniquitous but what they would propagate underhand to vilify the regular clergy and lower them in the eyes of the people. This was, I felt assured, one of the principal reasons why the inhabitants of this parish had been alienated from their Church; that I should continue to preach the doctrines of the Gospel in the face of opposition and insult. I don't remember ever to have seen so small a congregation when the weather is fair; among the farmers, only John Rossiter, and scarcely any of the colliers.

Tuesday, July 3.

I walked to Wick Lane to enquire after our old cook; she is speechless and hastening fast to her end. I also went to the schoolmistress and heard two of the children repeat what they had learned from the Psalms and Testament, and gave them a penny apiece, also half-a-crown to the schoolmistress. I visited old Mrs. Moon, and gave her daughter, who is a dwarf, something because she only receives sixpence a week from the Parish; and I said if she could only weed in the garden I would employ her during the time my man was so busily occupied. I also gave a shilling to the woman who looks after the old cook, because she has been kind and attentive to her.

Saturday, July 7.

As Joseph's cough still continues unabated, and he complained this morning of a sharp pain on his chest, I did not feel comfortable in his delaying his visit to Norman, which has been put off from day to day on the plea of his being better. I sent to order a post chaise to convey him to Bath, entreating he would mention everything he complains of to Norman, since nothing could be more absurd than attempting to deceive his doctor. I am apprehensive, as he says when he coughs he feels a sharp pain like a knife running into him. I have had too much experience in these matters not to feel alarmed. Hitherto he has attributed the pains in his chest to rheumatism, and to a blow he received some time ago from a ladder: I am of a different opinion.

Wednesday, July 11.

Joseph is not so well; his cough hard, and the expectoration considerable.

Thursday, July 12.

I walked in the morning to make some visits among the poor people. Crow's wife had been to say her husband was out of work, and had scarcely enough to support himself. I promised to employ him occasionally.

Sunday, July 15.

I determined, while lying awake, to write to Norman and ask his candid opinion on Joseph's case, and put it to him whether change of air might not be serviceable just now; if so, I will contrive next week to leave home with him in a steamer and take a trip to Ireland and back again, or to Liverpool. Anna will, I know, like to accompany us. I am decidedly of opinion that change of air would be serviceable if the complaint is not yet established; if it be, nothing can, I fear, be done. I felt very low and went to bed before ten o'clock.

Monday, July 16.

Poor Joseph was blooded on Saturday, and continues in Bath till to-morrow to come out with his brother Owen, and his friend Mr. Stewart.

Thursday, July 19.

Having promised my godson Alfred Boodle a kite, I was determined to let nothing interfere until that important business was accomplished. On leaving my bedroom at six I walked to the cooper's at Cridlingcot to procure a hoop for the bender of the kite and an upright to attach it to, so that before breakfast time the skeleton was complete, as was in the course of a couple of hours afterwards the whole of the manufactory. Joseph drew and painted the stars, and his companions made the tail. When it was perfectly dry after dinner we essayed to fly it, but there being scarcely a breath of air we gave up our undertaking.

Saturday, July 21.

Anna put into my hands a letter just arrived from my Mother, mentioning that my brother Russell had a very alarming inflammation in his leg which threatened mortification, and that he was attended by a physician as well as a surgeon. I resolved to see my Mother and brother to-morrow.

Sunday, July 22.

Mr. Boodle officiated for me to-day, as I was obliged to go into Bath, my brother Russell being dangerously ill. I got to my Mother's house a little after eleven; Russell was then asleep, and I read the Morning Service to my Mother before I went up to see him. After an early dinner with my Mother I walked to the White Hart Inn to order a carriage from thence to take us to Weston-super-Mare on the morrow.

Monday, July 23.

I was in my study before six, and wrote a letter to Sir Richard Hoare, now at Bath, to inform him of my going to Weston, which would preclude my seeing him. Soon after breakfast we left home. We got to the hotel at Weston a little after three. The place was quite in a bustle, it being the Club Day. Joseph bore his journey better than I expected, as he complained much on the road of a pain all round his chest, and his cough seemed hard and the expectoration difficult. However, after dinner he seemed better. Anna and myself walked before tea to the baths, and round the village of Weston, that has nothing at all to recommend it as to external appearance, and the noise and rioting of the Club by no means adds to its agreeableness just now. We had tea a little after seven, and enjoyed a calm sunset over the water from the inn window. At ten we went to bed. Joseph seems certainly better as to his cough, but complains of fatigue.

Tuesday, July 24.

We were disturbed by various noises, ringing of the door bell at three o'clock in the morning, etc., and I got up more fatigued than I went to bed. However, having procured a jug of salt water, I sponged myself all over, being afraid to venture into the swimming bath with a tendency to fullness of blood. I accompanied Anna to the bath during the middle of the day, and while she was bathing I made a sketch of the place where the lodging houses and baths are lately purchased by Dr. Fox, of Brislington, who seems to be doing a good deal on the spot. We dined at four, and Joseph and Anna afterwards took a ride on the sand, but the poney and donkey they hired were not of the most delightful description!

Wednesday, July 25.

I accompanied my daughter to the bath before breakfast; afterwards I walked from the hotel to Kew Stoke. I returned across the fields to the hotel, from whence I accompanied my daughter and Joseph to the pier, where I engaged a boat to take a sail in the bay at high water. We dined at four, and a little after five were seated in the sailing boat, but had so little wind we could scarcely move along. Had there been a little more we should have enjoyed our two hours' excursion much. We had sufficient water to land on the pier under the baths and lodging houses belonging to Dr. Fox. I well remember the rock which was called Knightstone before a single wall was erected; now there are two capacious houses besides the baths.

After tea I was obliged to speak about another sleeping-room, as that I had occupied the preceding night was by no means tenantable. My daughter had been put there on our arrival at the hotel on Monday, with a promise that no one was to sleep on the other side of the partition; for in fact it was a small bedroom divided into two by a thin deal partition, so that everything that was said and done was as audible as though the chamber had not been thus subdivided. The chambermaid put two young men into the apartment, which my daughter mentioned to me next morning; and, as no other alternative then presented itself, I gave up my room to her, and a miserable night I passed.

Thursday, July 26.

Owen and his friend joined us at dinner; they had taken Wells and Cheddar in their way from Camerton to Weston. The little lecture I had previously given the master of the house respecting our want of accommodation had a good effect, since they were promised comfortable beds.

Friday, July 27.

I walked in the evening with Anna, Owen, and Mr. Stewart along the sands to Uphill, and returned so completely tired I was not sorry to go to bed as soon as I had penned my sketches. Joseph evidently is the better for the air and amusement he has found at Weston; but we all agree it is a wretched place to continue in for any length of time.

Saturday, July 28.

After breakfast, having paid the bill which, with servants, etc., amounted to upwards of thirteen pounds, we got into the carriage which came from Bath overnight to convey us to Camerton. I first took an opportunity of speaking to Mr. Reeves, the proprietor of the hotel, respecting the great impropriety of putting young men in the room contiguous to that my daughter slept in, and put it to himself whether he, as the father of a family, would have felt well pleased had a daughter of his own been so circumstanced, where two young men, after having taken too much wine, might have said and done things very improper for a modest girl to hear or be privy to. He said he was very sorry, but it was the chambermaid's fault. I said I gave the hint which I hoped would prove serviceable in the future.

We drove to Banwell Cave; Owen and Mr. Stewart continued to be our outriders through Banwell, Churchill, and the beautiful vale called Wrington. At Blagdon we stopped to bait the horses, and procure a mutton chop for ourselves. While this was dressing I walked with Owen to the Church, whose beautiful tower has been degraded by a modern nave—the most ugly and ill-proportioned of any I have yet seen in these times of Church disfigurement. Resuming our vehicle about four o'clock, proceeded on with fresh vigour, and thence to Camerton and found all well; and, what is of more consequence, Joseph is certainly much better for his excursion, so that our time, trouble, and £20 expenditure will not be regretted.

Wednesday, August 1.

I found on going down to breakfast that some of Mr. James's family had been to see Anna yesterday evening to invite us to join the party this day at Timsbury, where a sermon is to be preached, and much prating to take place about the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts. Methinks they had better strive to mend matters at home, instead of going abroad to unsettle the minds of their fellows. I suppose the miraculous operations of the Spirit, which of late converted such numbers of *dark* colliers at Timsbury, will be brought on the tapis. I am no friend to such exhibitions. It is our business to check the extravagances of enthusiasm and superstition, not to countenance them, and I am therefore concerned to hear that the Bishop has been induced to sanction this meeting by his presence.

Thursday, August 2.

Although I had declined attending the omnium gatherum at Timsbury yesterday, I walked after breakfast with Anna, Owen, and Mr. Stewart, to be present at the opening of Radstock Church, which has undergone repairs and additions, and to contribute somewhat towards defraying the debt incurred by the expenditure exceeding the estimate, as it does in most other cases, as Boodle had sent round circular letters to his friends and neighbours. We found a considerable number assembled in the Church, and the collection amounted to upwards of £38. Mr. Trelawney Collins, of Timsbury, preached on the text: "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place!" Mr. Collins adapted the expression of "How dreadful is this place," etc., to the occasion for which we were assembled. The sermon more than an hour in length. The first part of the discourse, which lasted nearly half an hour, was a well-finished treatise which had been written with care and, I should imagine, by a different hand than his own, and the sermon would have made more impression had it ended with this; but, wishing to excite the attention to a stretch beyond what it was capable of attaining, the discourse lost much of its effect. Mr. Collins ought certainly to have defined the precise meaning of *dreadful* when applied to the *House of God,* which he neglected to do, and I fear the ignorant were left to their own imaginations.

We returned to Camerton in good time to dinner, as we were unwilling to leave Joseph longer alone, and strolled about the premises after dinner.

Sunday, August 5.

I preached in the morning on the miracle of the seven loaves, being part of the Gospel for the day. The people were attentive, but I am sorry to say I do not think there were one hundred in the Church. If I were to commence a new system as an evangelical teacher, the Methodists would attend; but I cannot prevail upon myself to do evil to work no good, unless it be good to gratify one's vanity by procuring full benches at the expense of one's principles.

Monday, August 6.

Owen and his friend Stewart left us for Bath on their return to London. They dine with my Mother, and go by one of the night coaches. Joseph seemed low and out of spirits at their departure.

Wednesday, August 8.

Anna and myself walked to Radstock at five to dine with the Boodles. After tea they got me to play at cards, which I hate and have not touched one since I was with Boodle at Christmas. We played three rubbers which lasted till nearly eleven o'clock, and I got a bad headache for my pains, as well as three shillings loss. I would readily have paid thrice the sum to be excused. We did not get home till twelve, as I declined sleeping on account of Joseph's being left alone. The servants were gone to bed, and it was with difficulty we awoke them.

Thursday, August 9.

Joseph over-exerted himself, I fear, yesterday, as he went into the Court of Requests to complain of a man who has cheated him in the purchase of some hay; and he also walked instead of drove to see Norman, who lives in the Circus. He tells me he has accepted an invitation from Mr. Upham, who has a house on Combe Down, to go there for a few days. He seems so bent on the plan I shall not oppose it further; but I fear close rooms and over-exertion to keep up conversation with strangers will not be so conducive to his amendment as the quiet of his own home.

Friday, August 10.

Having engaged to shew my godson (young Frederick Warren) Cheddar Cliffs and Wells Cathedral, in conjunction with Boodle and his family, I drove there in time to breakfast at seven, and in the course of an hour we were on our way to Cheddar. The young people much enjoyed the drive through the cliffs, which appeared to the greatest advantage of light and shade, the sun being in full splendour. Having put up our horses, we entered the cavern under the direction of some of the old women with candles, and we afterwards made a comfortable luncheon in the open air. I shewed the young people the paper mills, each being permitted to make his own sheet by way of memorial of his visit to the spot. It rained nearly the whole of the way to Wells, but held up, fortunately, to enable us to visit the Cathedral and Bishop's Palace, where we arrived about five o'clock. I meant to have made my visit to the crypt incog., but it happened unfortunately that the Bishop had seen us approaching, and Mr. Strachey came down to say he wished to see me. I found the gallery filled with company, and his Lordship in pontificalibus, as he was about to perform the ceremony of Baptism on his great grandson, Strachey's infant. Being myself stained with the variation of each soil from Cheddar to Wells, I was not sorry to retreat as speedily as possible.

We arrived at Radstock by eight o'clock. I was wet through and accepted the offer of sleeping there, and sent back my carriage and horses by Boodle's man, who on his return brought me a note from Anna saying that Joseph during a fit of coughing had ruptured a small vessel, and in consequence she had ordered a chaise to take him to Bath, and had gone with him. This intelligence, although I have long prepared my mind for the worst, gave me much uneasiness, and I passed a sleepless night.

Saturday, August 11.

The Boodles had an early breakfast, and I walked back to Camerton before ten o'clock, and got to Bath before one. I found Joseph much better for his bleeding, which Norman advised immediately on his arrival at my mother's. Norman told him he had taken too much nourishment since his return from Weston, and that it was absolutely necessary he should lose blood even if this had not occurred. I saw Norman, and had a plain, straightforward conversation with him with respect to Joseph, saying I wished him to be under his care till he gave him full permission to move back again to Camerton: that I had made arrangements to move to the South of Devonshire or to the extremity of Cornwall before the cold weather set in. He said that he had known patients recover under far worse circumstances than what he observed in Joseph; that there was no occasion for accelerating our movements westward till the cold weather began; the winter would be most trying to him, but he was in hopes he might rally. He says he may take ices, which I know my poor wife was so fond of. I have accordingly given directions he should be supplied with them; he may also have fruit. I have promised to go in to see him on Monday, and shall do so every other day as long as he continues in Bath. I drove Anna back to Camerton, where we arrived about seven o'clock.

Sunday, August 12.

The four lads from the Boodles' came to enquire after us, and drank tea. I put off their coming here to dinner to-morrow, as we go to Bath; indeed, I shall make no engagements anywhere now, knowing how much Joseph will have claims on our attention. Indeed, I felt rather uncomfortable that this accident happened when I was from home, but Anna managed very well in taking him at once to Bath.

Monday, August 13.

Quitting home at twelve o'clock, we took up a note from my Mother at the Red Post saying Joseph was going on well; but on our arrival we were greeted with the sad intelligence that during a fit of coughing the bleeding had returned from his lungs, and that in consequence Norman had been obliged to take more blood. On seeing him, poor fellow, he seemed very low, saying if this continued it must soon be over with him. We dined at my Mother's, or rather made a show of doing so, for neither poor Anna nor myself made half a meal. We got home to tea in order to avoid the damps and night air; indeed, I find I have a bad cold coming on, and I was glad to be in bed soon after.

Wednesday, August 15.

I drove Anna to my Mother's soon after breakfast. On our road to Bath we saw several people, and among them some of my own parish, going in to the Political Union,[1] which was to take place at Sidney Gardens.

The rabble brawl about their rights; we who are not of the rabble have a right to enquire, nay demand, of the Servants of the King and Ministers of State why they did not immediately enforce the Proclamation issued at the express command of the King respecting the putting down of these disorderly, nay, these rebellious meetings. I read on several of the banners, "Grey and Reform"—"Althorpe and Reform"—"We will maintain our Rights"—"We will be free." Free, indeed! What am I saying? The Great Disposer of all events, if He wills our destruction cannot better effect His purpose than by leaving everything in the direction of such fools and knaves as are now placed at the helm of government, thus verifying the truth of the old adage, "Quem perdere vult prius dementat."

Before I went to bed I wrote a note to Mrs. Boodle asking her permission to let Georgiana come and spend some days with Anna at the Parsonage, as I know her spirits will flag if left too much to her own feelings during her brother's illness, and I am so much in my study I contribute but little to change her ideas.

Friday, August 17.

I see by the Bath papers that the Reform meeting at Bristol was attended with riot; that at Bath without any overt acts of insubordination. But a silent, sly dog is worse sometimes than one that barks.

Tuesday, September 4.

It being a beautiful morning we resolved to pay our long-meditated visit to Southfield, and set off after I had read the paper.

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[1] Formed in 1831 to promote the Reform Bill.

We got to Mr. Hoare's before one o'clock, and found the house full of his relatives. They set down eighteen of a day to dinner, all of the name of Hoare—quite a patriarchal family. Henry Hoare has sold out of his regiment, which was going to the West Indies. If he did so on the score of health, I think this country is in a worse state on account of the cholera than that he was going to. There are now eleven cases in Bath, and at Bristol it rages with great violence.

Thursday, September 6.

Pestilence stalks over the earth, but still we all eat and drink, and rise up to play. A beggar woman or, as they call them, mumpers, came to the place. On my asking where she lived, I found she was an inhabitant of that wretched place Avon Street, in Bath, and that she was come into the country to sell matches, etc., etc. On questioning her about the cholera, she said it was not so bad as they had reported it to be. This woman will probably go to sleep at Mrs. Moon's in Wick Lane, who still receives persons of this description in spite of the admonition I gave her not long since, so that we have good reason to expect it will reach our collieries: God's will be done.

Saturday, September 8.

I made a point of going to the shop, the public-house, and several of the colliers' residences to caution them against receiving mumpers or beggars coming from other parts, especially from Avon Street, Bath, into their houses, since by this means the cholera might be brought into the parish, and rage in our collieries here as it is still doing in Staffordshire. I told them it was absurd to imagine it was not infectious, for I had heard from my son who is residing in London that the sexton of the parish where he resides had caught the infection from digging a grave and assisting at the funeral of a person who died of the complaint, and died himself the next day. The people seemed to be convinced of the prudence and propriety of my advice, and promised to be guided by it. I also recommended cleanliness; and this perambulation of my parish occupied me nearly till dinner time.

Thursday, September 13.

Having promised the Bishop to be with him on Thursday I could not disappoint him, and I got to Wells at half-past eleven.

Arrived at the Mitre Inn, Wells, I found myself very unwell; I therefore employed the interval in taking rest. We dined at five, only the Bishop and his daughter, Mrs. Powell, and her daughter, sister to Mrs. Strachey. When the dinner-bell summoned us, I went into the drawing-room, but felt very far from well, since the pains which had accompanied me to Wells had now returned. At dinner it was still worse, and there happened to be a haunch of venison of the haut goût which, though approved of by the generality, I found too powerful for my nerves, in that nothing remained for me but to make my exit, which I did as quietly as possible. My kind host, however, shortly after, supposing I was not well, sent his butler, who brought me some Epsom Salts, of which I took a good dose, and I procured some other medicine, which fortunately relieved me, and I verily believe saved me a serious illness, as the tension of the stomach was such, had I not removed it, inflammation must have ensued. I officiated as Chaplain at Evening Prayers in the Chapel, as the Archdeacon was from home; and we got to bed a little after ten.

Friday, September 14.

I had but little sleep during the night, but felt myself so much better that I got up and attended Chapel and the breakfast table.

I rose at six and walked on the terrace for an hour, the morning being beautiful. Afterwards I accompanied the Bishop, who was on horseback, to the Park and the potato grounds he has let to the poor people, nearly sixty acres in extent, and the plan seems to answer even beyond his expectations. The renters of these portions of good ground at twelve shillings a rood amount to upwards of two hundred, and I was glad to hear they were not only punctual in their payments, but so industrious in their habits that no one has received parochial relief since he has become a renter. On our return I read the Prayers in the chapel, and after breakfast, having taken leave of my kind host, I hastened forwards to Camerton.

Saturday, September 15.

I found the Jarretts had sent three brace of birds, so we were well stocked. We called to thank them after breakfast, and found only Mr. Stephen and his aunt, Mrs. Anne Stephens, at the Manor House. I think his manners are much altered for the better. Adversity is a good tutor, and he has experienced losses in his West India property, which may be of real benefit if it teaches him humility, as well as a determination to employ his own talents, and rely on his own resources more than on uncertain wealth.

We drove round by Priston to see Hammond, and to leave a brace of the birds there.

Monday, September 17.

I rose early and finished my answers to the list of enquiries sent by the Commissioners respecting my Living, which I have stated to the utmost farthing, perhaps greatly to my own detriment when an Income Tax is laid on, for the only deductions I have made are on account of repairs on the premises, and the pensions paid out of the Living at the Bruton audit, and the Procurations, etc., paid at Visitation; in all about £21, so that the gross amount is about £478 per annum. I have also laid out £1,100 on the house and premises, and £250 in building the new Glebe Farm House, barns, stables, walls round the garden, etc., etc. The rates and taxes going out of the Living are at least £50 per annum, so that when the purchase-money that was paid by my Uncle Haggard be added to the capital I have sunk, I do not think my present income ought to be lowered, since an annuity might have been purchased for £3,500, which would have given almost an equal return of the clear profit. When we add to this sum £2,000 spent in education to enable a clergyman to take Orders, it is quite a fortune; and yet there is an outcry risen against our Order that we are too well paid, and that £200 a year would be ample provision throughout the kingdom for each incumbent.

The Bishop read to me the other morning a well-written pamphlet which he has prepared for the press on the Commutation of Tithe, in which he has proved that the average value of the Livings in his diocese is not above £200 a year.

Wednesday, September 19.

After breakfast we drove to Vallis, accompanied by Mr. Stephen Jarrett and his friend. Taking Kilmersdon in our way, we stopped to visit the Church under the escort of Mr. Edwards, the curate, which gave an opportunity of seeing the painted glass, set up by Mr. Thomas Jolliffe, of the Mount of Olives which he visited in his expedition to Jerusalem, and had the glass stained at Bristol after a sketch taken by himself. It is literally as green as an olive—if this be any merit in the artist to make his work accord with the name of the place he described. We passed through Mells, and thence to Nunney; I entered the little Inn for the purpose of procuring some bread and butter, and was not very much pleased at the intelligence afterwards conveyed that the landlord was upstairs ill of the cholera!

Wednesday, September 26.

I borrowed a gig at the Manor House to drive Anna into Bath, and bring back Elinor Page to spend a few days with her, as my own carriage is repairing. We found Joseph much the same; he has begged me to give up the farm and sell the stock, which I have consented to, to make his mind easy; but I fear I shall be a considerable loser. There seems to be a fatality about the Glebe Farm, since not one of the four tenants who have occupied it but have left it half a year in my debt, and yet the rent is by no means beyond what it ought to be. If the Farmers this Michaelmas are behindhand in their payments, I am sure I do not know how I am to meet the outgoings of the ensuing year; but ere that perhaps all our property will be involved in one common ruin. If the Conservative Party are sufficiently strong, and can influence the King to have a new Ministry, the evil may yet be arrested; but, alas! I have small hopes this will be so.

I rode "Ellen," and Anna rode "Cam," who had followed the carriage into Bath, back to Camerton to a four o'clock dinner. On our arrival we found Mrs. Boodle, with Marianne and Georgiana. After tea we had some music, and I went to bed immediately after prayers. Marianne was left with us.

Thursday, September 27.

I hear that some cases have occurred at Timsbury which are considered as having much the appearance of cholera, which Mr. Collins has doctored with success by giving laudanum, spirits of wine, and soda.

Tuesday, October 2.

I accompanied Elinor Page to Woodborough in order to shew her the beautiful situation of that place, and the great oak contiguous to Waram Mead on the situation between the streams facing Woodborough. While passing Woodborough I saw Mr. Purnell, who is almost blind and upwards of 80 years old, standing on the roof of his house and directing the tilers about the work they were engaged in. This old miser, who can look *to an inch* as to what concerns his temporal interests is as blind as the tiles on the roof as to what concerns his future state, since he neglects to confer happiness, nay, even common comfort on his fellows during his long career through life, and even permits his old servant to be dying by a lingering death, close to his door, and will not give him a shilling to procure even the necessaries of life. But why should I intrude these sad considerations?

The day was beautiful; our walk was beautiful, and I enjoyed it, as did my companion, to the utmost.

Wednesday, October 3.

I find the cholera has broken out most violently in Paulton, and nine died of the disorder the day before yesterday, and three or four cases are considered hopeless. It seems one of these vagabond match-sellers from Bath conveyed it to the house where he was taken in for a night's lodging, and immediately conveyed the infection to the household and to others. He was buried in his clothes the following morning, and those who died are buried in a piece of ground without funeral ceremony. Curtis says that he finds bleeding the most efficacious remedy, and says he is pretty confident he can stop it if called in at the first; but it seems that out of nine cases the whole perished under his management and that of Flower and Baynton, of Radstock, so I for one should have little confidence in their skill. If it comes to us, I suppose pro forma we must send for some of these worthies, but perhaps we may as well let it alone. I am happy to hear the common people, now the danger is come to their own doors, begin to take some precaution, such as whitewashing their houses and purchasing camphor, upwards of a pound having been sold in one day at the shop at Camerton; they also burn juniper, which grows in quantities under Falkland Knoll. Curtis says that he takes no precautions to avoid infection. I shall commit myself unto the Great Director of all events, saying, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." At the best my clay tenement is but a weak domicile for the active spirit which occupies it, and is very easily discomposed; but it cannot well be otherwise, it has stood the changes of the seasons for sixty years, which is a good lease of any house, and no wonder if it be not so strong as at first.

It rained violently during the whole night, which beating against my windows, contributed somewhat to spoil my rest, and as soon as it was light I went downstairs and got Sir Walter Scott's "Lay of the last Minstrel" from the bookcase, with which I was fully occupied till breakfast time.

Saturday, October 6.

I drove Anna to my Mother's after breakfast. We had been prepared by a note to expect a considerable change had taken place, but I saw but little alteration in the poor fellow's countenance, and he had been amusing himself with drawing. According to Norman's recommendation he is going to burn tar in his sitting-room, as the fumes arising from thence are considered as being favourable to the cough. My Mother worries herself more than I thought she would have done, for she must know by sad experience that the progress of the complaint is so gradual that there is no immediate cause for alarm.

Monday, October 8.

The cholera, I hear, rages at Paulton, and four more cases are dead! This damp weather must, I think, contribute to increase the pestilence, especially within the confined residences of the colliers.

Tuesday, October 9.

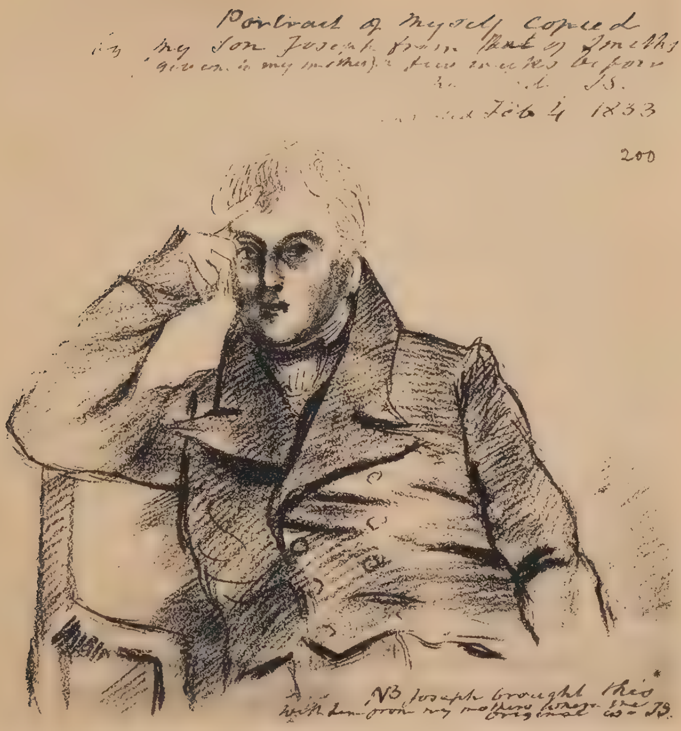
The clerk, who came for the surplice to have it washed, states that two of Hill's family in Bridge Place have been attacked by the cholera, which they caught at Paulton.

Thursday, October 11.

I hear that nearly forty persons have died of the cholera at Paulton, and that they are interred without funeral service.

Saturday, October 13.

After breakfast I received a letter from Mr. Lewton, the bailiff of the coal works, announcing the breaking out of the cholera at Camerton. I immediately walked to his house, taking with me some camphor and aromatic vinegar to give him. This being pay day with the colliers it occurred to me that if the infection be among them he must take every precaution to avoid it. The poor fellow seemed much alarmed, for the boy who died



Portrait of myself copied by my son Joseph from that of Smith's (given to my Mother) a few weeks before he died—J.S.

inserted Feb. 4, 1833

N.B. Joseph brought this with him from my Mother's where the original is

J. S.

was at the Evening School he keeps at his house yesterday, and appeared quite well; but he must have caught the complaint from old Mrs. Raisin, his grandmother. I immediately wrote to Curtis, the apothecary, desiring him to come to Camerton. I also saw Cook, the father of the boy who died and now lies in the same house with his grandmother, and said he must get the bodies put instantly in coffins and interred out of the way. I then spoke to White about digging a deep grave in the churchyard, out of the line where bodies are now interred, but within the consecrated enclosure.

Curtis, accompanied by Flower, the apothecary from Chilcompton, came to me about the middle of the day and said that prompt measures must be taken to prevent the spreading of the infection, and we must accelerate as soon as possible the interment of the bodies. I walked with them to the churchyard, where the clerk and his two lads were digging the grave. They said it was much better that I did not officiate at the funeral: that at other places it was not done. I said I should be guided by the feelings of the people themselves who attended the funeral, for if I shewed myself fearful of catching the complaint while interring the body, it would have the effect of deterring them from bringing it to the grave and of assisting at all at the interment.

I ordered the man at the shop to distribute two ounces of camphor among the people who came to his house, and desired him to say to them, if they kept a little in the mouth now and then it would be beneficial as a preventative.

I also told the clerk to purchase on my account at the public-house a bottle of spirits to give a glass to each of the people who attended the funeral in the evening, or rather those who conveyed the bodies to the grave. I determined to read the Funeral Service, which I did in the presence of five or six persons and the clerk after dinner, and saw the grave filled in. The foolish fellow White had let them have the velvet pall, but I made him bring it back and had it laid upon the ground for two or three hours, and ordered him to let it stay in the open air for some time to prevent infection.

I desired the schoolmistress to dismiss the girls' school till the disorder was abated, and give notice to their parents to keep them clean in their persons, and prevent them going to infected places. I desired Anna to send a bottle of port wine and one of elder wine to the schoolmistress and her daughter, as they seem completely terrified, and really may be more liable to infection through apprehension if they have nothing to cheer their spirits. I was occupied in the evening till prayer time in preparing my sermon for the morrow, on the distinction to be made between the adhering to the letter of the law and acting according to the spirit of the law. The text was taken from the Gospel for the day: "It came to pass as Jesus went into the house of one of the chief priests to eat bread, on the Sabbath day, that they watched him." It had pleased the Almighty Disposer of all events to permit the pestilence to visit these parts. "It is now raging," I said, "at our very doors; our companions and associates are dropping off around us, misery of all descriptions must in consequence be the result. It is our duty to prove ourselves, both in our private and public capacities, kindly disposed to the afflicted and distressed, by essential acts of useful service, instead of wordy professions and unavailing lamentations; and implicitly conform to the advice and directions given by the medical persons who attended them, and who, under Providence, were the only instruments of checking the violence of the disorder and preventing its further extension, etc., etc."

Sunday, October 14.

Between the services we walked to Colliers Row to enquire whether the house where the infected died had been properly fumigated with the tobacco which I ordered to be taken there for the purpose. I found it had, and the people were also burning tar ropes in the other houses. Three fresh cases are lying: Perfett, who attended the coffin of Cook's boy, and assisted putting it in the grave; another at Redhill; and Raisin's wife, who is married to the son of the woman who first died. John Rossiter called at the Parsonage after dinner; he seems completely upset, and cried while speaking of the increase of the complaint and its probable consequences. I desired him to get some quicklime to put in the grave dug yesterday and the other graves which may be dug, also some juniper to burn; and I offered my Glebe House as a receptacle of patients, should the number increase.

Monday, October 15.

I walked into the village to enquire after the sick and see if I could be of any service. The boy Perfett, at Bridge Place, is in a fair way of recovery, but I was much hurt at the apathy of his parents, who had not bought anything for him with the money I gave them yesterday, although Curtis said he might take mutton broth; and when I spoke of the nasty dung-heaps, and filthiness of the children before the doors, which I said would prolong their son's illness, if not give contagion to others, the father replied, "They ought to clear it away." I asked who he meant by "They." He replied, "The people of the parish." I was really *angry*, and said, if they were so very careless and lazy as not to work for themselves in making their places clean, I for one would not assist them with one halfpenny of my money.

I spoke afterwards to Green, the under bailiff of the coal works, and told him he should see that the drains were opened, and the dung heaps removed or put into a hole in their gardens. He said, *it was the Lord's will they should die; that he could not prevent it*. I said he was a greater fool than I had supposed him to be, and if he would not see it done I would speak to Lewton, as overlooker of the collieries, who would enforce the performance of what the laws enjoined to be done. This seemed to have its weight, and he said he would see that the nuisances were removed. After dinner a note was put into my hand from Mrs. Boodle, who urges Anna and myself to come to Radstock while the pestilence is raging around us. I wrote as lively a note as I could in reply, saying I should be a poltroon to desert my post when the enemy was about to attack it. I shall get Anna to return to Bath to-morrow to be with her brother, and then I shall be at liberty to perform my duty without distressing her feelings.

Tuesday, October 16.

On walking into the village after breakfast I learnt that Cook's girl died last night, and that they had buried her about four o'clock in the morning, but no new case has occurred. I cannot help thinking that the infection continues to be conveyed by the bed-clothes, as they ought to be burned. On my return I found a kind note from Mrs. Boodle, in reply to that I had sent her, in which she begged me to be careful and not to put myself in the way of infection unnecessarily.

Wednesday, October 17.

To-day I continued my walk to call on the Boodles. The pestilence has not reached Radstock, but I think it will ere long. I sincerely hope it will not reach the family of my good friends: I love them affectionately. I told them to be under no apprehension about my having brought the infection, as I purposely avoided to visit the sick before I came to see them, but should do so on my return, which I did directly when I got back.

Friday, October 19.

The Schoolmistress called and wasted nearly a couple of hours!

Sunday, October 21.

I heard on going down to breakfast that the old woman Lockyear and her son-in-law were interred in the night, and that new cases had occurred. The mode of carrying the bodies in a cart to the grave is liable to great objection, as they must be handled to put them into the cart and take them out. We have a bier in the Church, which would be far better. I desired the harness maker to get an order for some straps to enable persons bearing the coffin to put over their shoulders.

Should the mortality increase, a hole ought to be dug in my Glebe Field at Meadyates, as I before proposed, and a couple of men expressly appointed for attending the interments.

Monday, October 29.

Anna arrived about nine, and said how anxious Joseph was to come home, and how much more comfortable she should be to have him back and attend upon him here. I thought it most advisable to write to Mr. Norman, which I did in the following words, enclosing a draft for £50 on the Bladud Bank:

"My Dear Sir,

"I cannot sufficiently express the feelings of gratitude I have long entertained for your unremitting attentions to my dear son. I only wish it were in my power to make a more adequate return: sed non omnia possumus omnes: if the amount of the enclosed sum were to be multiplied ten times it would be inadequate to come up to my ideas of what I conceive to be your due. Let my gratitude make up the balance of the account.

"Believe me, dear Sir,
"Most faithfully yours,
"John Skinner."

"P.S.—I feel very anxious that the poor fellow should return home, that I may be enabled to pay *my attention* also to him while I can so do."

Anna left us a little after five. I feel so low and uncomfortable after her departure that I cannot fix my attention to anything, so shall go to bed. I can write no more: "In manus tuas animam meam commendo Domine Deus."—Amen.

Wednesday, October 31.

The note I received from Anna, intimating that Joseph had indications of another expectoration of blood, hurried me into Bath immediately I received it. I found him better than I expected, and at his desire I administered the Sacrament. My Mother seems very nervous, and my brother Russell, alas! far from well; but still he is able to amuse himself with writing my Journals, etc., etc., which is a great comfort, otherwise his time would hang heavy on his hands. Poor Joseph cannot help being irritable at times, owing to the complaint; indeed, I feel no less so without the complaint; fain would I be released from this thraldom, and almost envy the freedom my son will shortly procure when released from this sad life. Staying in Bath the night, they made me up a bed in the parlour—the house being quite full.

Thursday, November 1.

I may truly say I spent a sleepless night. What with the noise in the street, the ringing of bells, and the striking of the clock every quarter, together with the bawling of the watchman and the blowing of the wind, and the snoring of the dog, "Vallis," who would not leave my room, having accompanied me from Camerton, I could not close my eyes, and passed the heavy hours in a state of mental and bodily pain till the morning again cheered me for a while. The chaise took myself afterwards to Camerton.

Friday, November 2.

It rained incessantly the whole morning. It is most providential I am not called upon to visit the sick, the parish being again healthy, although someone has inserted in the Bath papers stating that we have had seventy on the sick list.

Monday, November 5.

The post brought me a note from Anna saying Joseph had passed an indifferent night. I drove to Widcombe immediately and found him in bed, but he said he felt better. I find my Mother is very averse from his removal home, but what can be more foolish? She has left her own home and lodges on the South Parade, declaring it makes her so nervous that she could never think of seeing Joseph again, and now when I want to relieve her, and Joseph is most anxious to return home, she is doing all she can to prevent it and to agitate his mind by putting obstacles in the way.

Before dinner I had a good deal of conversation about Russell, who should have a skilful surgeon instead of a bungling apothecary to attend him. My Mother seemed also to be convinced of the necessity of having Norman's advice. Poor Russell has a complication of disorders, so, poor fellow, he will be dosed quantum sufficit, I will answer for it. He is really looking very ill, and it grieves me. I did prevail so far with him, I hope, to send for Norman, and I promised to settle all the additional expense. My Mother considers none of these things, in fact she is now so much under the control of a base woman who has gotten into her service and confidence, estranging my Mother from her own family and her other servants who have been with her several years; what will be the end of this unfortunate infatuation I know not. This woman, I learn, has been found out in a number of bad doings, and I hear that she has already prevailed so far that her name is inserted in my Mother's Will for a legacy. Now my poor Mother is left entirely at her disposal, she has succeeded so far as to get my Mother away from her own house and, I hear, is endeavouring to persuade her to give up housekeeping altogether and to live in lodgings attended by her alone.

I did not touch upon the subject of Joseph's removal, and my Mother seemed quite composed. I told her I was convinced that she was in the power of ill advisers; but her own son was the best and properest person to advise her, and she would not attend to his advice: that if she did not dismiss Mrs. Lake I should not again visit her. My Mother then got up from her chair, took the candle and went out of the room to her dear adviser, who I doubt not had been listening at the door.

Anna returned to Camerton to give directions about what was requisite to be done for the reception of dear Joseph. I have so arranged that we are to bring back Joseph either on Wednesday or Thursday without acquainting my Mother, as she is very averse from his removal home, and declaring it will break her heart if he leaves Bath.

My Mother forgets that a Father has as much interest in the welfare of his child at least as a grandmother. When she knows he is removed she herself will be more comfortable.

Sleep was far from my eyes. I felt sorely oppressed as the result of my visit to my Mother.

Wednesday, November 7.

I removed my writing-desk from my study to the bedroom over the parlour, where I mean to sleep and keep what books I have need of, so that poor Joseph will have no interruption in his asylum, which I am sure he will find quite as comfortable as the two rooms he will quit at Widcombe; and when we have put up the sandbags on the windows and doors we shall keep the rooms quite as warm as those he now occupies. I find as it is we can get the thermometer at 60.

Thursday, November 8.

I walked to Shoscombe, visiting Jacob Balne, a poor wretched old man who is brought to the severest misery, and will soon, if I mistake not, be summoned into another world to give an account of his misconduct in this. His wife has left him, and is now in a brothel in Avon Street. I read prayers to him, after a long and serious conversation. I, moreover, promised to lend him the sheets and blankets I had lent to Thomas's wife as soon as they removed from the Red Post, for he says he has nothing to cover him in his bed but his old great-coat. I gave him 2*s*. 6*d*.

On my return to Camerton I found that my son Owen, who returned from Town last night, had been to Camerton and brought me the following note saying that Joseph and Anna meant to come back to-morrow:

"My Dearest Papa,

"I have had rather a bad night, so that I am not so well to-day, but was up at ten fully prepared for my journey. I had thought that it was fully fixed that I was to go yesterday, and I was up early and quite strong. Norman called at twelve, thinking we were to go. I hope, my dearest Papa, that nothing will hinder my being again under the roof where I was brought up, and believe me that it imparts a happiness to my mind, which has of late been low and melancholy, that we shall all meet again; and if it be the will of God that my time should be short at home, it will be a source of happiness to be amongst my nearest and dearest relatives.

"Adieu, dearest Papa, and remain
"Your ever affectionate Son,
"J. H. SKINNER."

I was delighted to hear of this determination. A great load has been taken from my mind, as I was much afraid the poor fellow had been induced to continue away from his own home, and that I should have been prevented the melancholy office of attending him and administering to his comforts at the last.

Friday, November 9.

At twelve I walked through the plantations, hoping to meet with them, as Owen said they would be here at half-past twelve, and I wished to open the gates for the carriage myself. They did not arrive till past two, and I was most happy to find Joseph bore his journey so well; indeed, the day was beautiful, and nothing occurred during the journey to disturb or distress him. I sat with him till dinner time, and again went to him after tea. We shall be able now, one or the other, to attend him constantly.

I hear the Bishop has given Warner the two Livings vacant by the death of Mr. Quick, Corston and Chelwood: in these times perhaps it had been better if his Lordship had given one of them to some poor Curate, especially as Warner has had before two Livings given him by the Bishop, and two by Bishop Beadon, all of which he relinquished without any ostensible motive for his so doing. I fear he will expose his patron to disagreeable animadversions on the subject.

Saturday, November 10.

I must endeavour to arrange it that Anna does not continue the whole day in Joseph's room. She sat up till twelve o'clock last night with him, and as we have so attentive a nurse she need not do so, and I am well assured that the disorder is infectious to those of the same family. I will endeavour to persuade her to take regular exercise on horseback with her brother Owen, and I will take my station in the sick-room meanwhile. I must relinquish all other occupations and attend solely to one, which is to make the poor fellow as comfortable as possible as long as his hour-glass continues to run. I am happy to find the servants seem disposed to give no trouble.

Wednesday, November 14.

I offered to come and read with Joseph, but he seems better satisfied with his sister. I took some of the drawings I had finished for him to look at.

Thursday, November 15.

I find it is almost too much to bear the pressure on myself. Owen is no comfort to me, and Anna is almost the whole day with her brother. Joseph received the Sacrament in Bath, but since that has not spoken on the subject of religion; and, when I have asked Anna or hinted something whether he wished to see me, I have always heard some objection—either he was going to sleep, or just going to his meal. I observe, poor fellow, his mind is not inclined to his Father: to what am I to attribute his being set against me now?

Saturday, November 17.

When I went down to breakfast scarcely one word was spoken by Anna, and Owen was sullen and sulky. On my remonstrating with him, he said that he had nothing to converse with me about, as we had not one idea in common. This led to a renewal of his insolence. I could not help saying he was as conceited as he was ignorant and idle, and I could prophesy he would never be a lawyer. He said, at any rate he knew more than I ever did; and as for my writings, no one would ever read the nonsense I had written. When I mentioned my having gained a prize at Trinity College when I was an undergraduate, and that I had written for the University Prize as soon as I took my degree, his reply was that none but the most stupid fellows ever thought of writing for the college prize, and as for the University it was a clear token my composition was not approved of, otherwise I should have gained that prize, which might have been of some credit to me. I need not recapitulate the conversation that ensued: afterwards I went to my own occupations. Soon after, Mr. Boodle called, and although I heard him speaking with my daughter below stairs I did not go down to him, finding myself quite exhausted and unable to converse. Joseph sent to say he wished to speak to Mr. Boodle, who continued some time in his room. I went thither about a quarter of an hour after, when Boodle was gone. Joseph appeared to be satisfied with the little attentions I shewed him, but when I offered to come with my drawings to his room after tea he said he felt fatigued and should wish to get to sleep. At dinner Owen directed what conversation he had to his sister. After dinner when the wine was placed on the table, and I had passed the bottle to him after I had helped his sister, he shoved it away, saying he should not take any. Seeing he was in no humour to make either me or himself comfortable, I went into my bedroom and shortly after to bed.

Sunday, November 18.

I rose with a heavy heart, and with no very pleasant anticipations respecting the performance of the Sunday's duty. There was but a thin congregation. On returning to the Parsonage after Church, the newspapers being brought, Owen took one and I the other; but he made such a rustling and crumpling with his I could scarcely read at all, so I took a walk round the plantations, and came again to the parlour where Owen was sitting. I said on entering, of which he took not the slightest notice, I was sorry to see him in the same humour. He said there was no reason, because he had given me his hand, that he had forgiven what I said to him! by no means: he did not mean to speak to me, and that was enough. I said I thought the service he attended would have put better ideas in his head. He said nothing I could say, either in private or public, would have any weight with him: that I pretended to be religious, but that was a mere farce: he knew I was a Deist or a Socinian if I was anything; but certainly I did not preach the religion of Christ. I was so much hurt by this new and unexpected charge, which I never could have dreamt of, I said to him: "Wretched youth, do not bring upon yourself your own damnation by speaking on such a day as this what you know to be false." He then began swearing, and repeating all he could to provoke me; but he did not succeed at the time, for I left the room and walked on the Church Walk, and shortly after I went into the Church and read the service. On my return I asked Owen where his sister was. He gave me some unpleasant reply, and I went upstairs and found her in her brother's room, for he was got up and sitting in the arm-chair in the study. On my saying "I am sorry you did not come to Church," her reply was, "You know I never do of an evening." Joseph said something about begging me not to agitate him, although I spoke low, and without the least anger. I told him I had offered to read to him, and on that day would do what I could to compose rather than agitate him. He said he did not like my doctrines, and had rather not hear them, since they were not the doctrines of the Church. I begged he would point out in what respect they were not the doctrines of the Church. He said he was not able to enter into arguments, but he expected to be saved by grace. He then said he would rather have some other person to converse with on the subject of religion than me; that he begged, therefore, I would not trouble myself to read prayers to him or do anything to disturb him; if he had known what he was to experience when he came here, he should not have come: I had been quarrelling with his brother and sister, and if that was to go on he had rather go back to Bath; there he should be quiet: that he had £200 and could pay for a lodging. I replied I should leave him, for I saw I could be of no service to him. Surely I have done nothing to deserve all this. After tea I went up to my bedroom and wrote thus far; all these things are against me, and will bring down my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. I am now going to bed, I cannot say to sleep. There is surely not one thing now in the world that can excite in my mind a wish to live longer in this toilsome state. But not my will, but Thine be done, O God.

Monday, November 19.

I had no sleep, and I kept my bed the whole day, and could not take any kind of nourishment whatever. Anna came into my room in the evening; she still perseveres in the same mind as heretofore, that is, to side with her brothers in their unnatural rebellion against their Father. I told her both she and her brother were incurring a great responsibility in setting Joseph against my religious assistance, and I hope he will be brought to see things in a different light before he dies. I wrote thus far in my chamber when I arose from my bed, and have in part disburthened my mind by so doing.

Wednesday, November 21.

I got up to breakfast: still the same sulky behaviour in my son Owen he has shewn for some time. I walked up to the Glebe Farm to enquire about the hay which Collins had bought: as Owen told me he would dispose of the stock in spite of me, I thought this precaution necessary! On my return I met a sister of Moon's wife, whose family has . . .

Poor Russell, who finished writing at this place, being too ill to attend further to his accustomed employment, might say "Lassus artemque repono." On the 21st December my Mother wrote to me saying he was so ill there were no hopes of his recovery. I drove into Bath directly and saw him in a most weak and exhausted state, and a few days after he died.

These lines I retain as a votive offering.

These lines are now a blank for ever;
No one will employ them again.
Cold is that hand which once was guided by them in its course,
And cold and stiff will soon be mine
Which now, with a fluent pen, records this true observation,
That high and low, rich and poor,
Shortly must be with the dust.

Here is indeed a blank: who will fill it up?

Let us close the door, there is nobody at home.

J. S.

APPENDIX I

DESCRIPTION OF A DAY SPENT IN COLLEGE DURING THE WINTER OF 1792

To W. P——, Esq.

WHY with such jangling notes and shrill
The hateful harbinger of ill
  Resounds that ceaseless bell ;
Say, Scout, who thus uncall'd dost creep
Like some foul fiend to frighten sleep
  Be quick, the reason tell ?

Rouse, Master, rouse, and dress in haste
The quarter's chime is nearly past
  Two minutes wants at most.
I've put your breeches by your head
And thick greatcoat have also laid
  For bitter is the frost.

He vanishes : at once I rise
Rubbing my dim and misty eyes
  And leap upon the floor,
But not the coldest marble hearth
Not plunge into Carshalton's bath
  Could chill my limbs much more.

Bell stops : unjustly blaming scout
For stockings turning inside out
  I hurry on my clothes.
Stiff fingers, bungling much thro' haste
But more so from the eastern blast
  Which thro' my casement blows.

With little time to wash or comb
Slipshod I quit my dressing-room
  And clatter down the stairs.
One instant finds my cap on pate,
My gown o'er coat y'cleped great,
  My band beneath my ears !

Now shuffling to the Chapel door
Behind two sloven students more
  I follow up the aisle.
Displeas'd, good natur'd Chapman stares,
For nearly half done are the prayers
  And Lessons read meanwhile.

At length the benediction said
The President he takes the lead
  And Fellows follow fast,
Scholars and commoners behind,
Precedence, form, nor order mind.
  The devil catch the last.

This sketch, dear Will, with flowing pen
I draw, to shew how College men
  Commence the morning here.
Doubtless their more restricted lot,
Yourself at ease, you envy not
  This season of the year.

Rolls smoking hot, at half-past eight
And George and butter on a plate
  The scarecrow Thomas brings,
Laying a napkin passing white,
Tea equipage he puts in sight
  Whilst loud the kettle sings.

At half-past nine tea-drinking o'er
And cups returned thro' pantry door
  Our books we take instead.
By turns Virgilian murmurs please
Or thunders from Demosthenes
  Hurl'd 'gainst the tyrant's head.

This author chiefest of the set
We lecture in to Tutor Kett
  Must therefore come prepar'd.
At one, exactly on the stroke
The time expir'd for sporting oak,
  My outer door's unbarr'd.

If day prove only passing fair
I walk for exercise and air
  Or for an hour skate,
For a large space of flooded ground
Which Christchurch gravel walks surround
  Has solid froze of late.

A quarter wanting now of three
On ent'ring gates of Trinity
  For dressing will suffice.
As Highland barber, far fam'd Duff
Within that time will plenty puff
  Of lime in both my eyes.

Now shrilly pealing kitchen bell
We find a diff'rent errand tell
  To that for Morning Prayers ;
It dinner, dinner, seems to call
Enticing students to the hall
  By dozens down the stairs.

Fellows then march in garments sable
To upper seat y'clept High Table
  And range them on each side
Where Commoners of first degree
In silk gowns clad, seem equally
  With them in state allied.

The Batchelors upon the right
And Scholars' Table standing by't
  Are lower in the Hall,
Because some space it does require
For the large grate and flaming fire
  Which blazes 'gainst the wall.

Extending from the high raised floor
In length : we count two tables more
  For me and my compeers,
That is, for Youths with leading strings
And sleeveless gowns, poor awkward things
  Entitled Commoners.

Our Hall arrangement being said
We must add too the Griffin's head
In centre, made of brass.
For what? You ask—why not to eat
But for a kind of after treat
Whilst grosser viands pass.

'Tis then before concluding grace
Some gownsman, rising from his place
Whilst servants bustle out,
Towards the Griffin walking slow
To Fellows makes initial bow
And then begins to spout.

Μηνιν ἄειδε Θεα then
Or verses from the Mantuan pen
Sound in melodious strains.
Or lines from Milton's Paradise
With emphasis delivered nice
A just applause obtains.

And here *en passant* I will state
A dialogue we heard of late
Betwixt Vice Pres. and chap,
Who not a friend to spouting stood
At Griffin's head in sulky mood
The verses in his cap.

But not being able to see well
To read them there, much less to spell,
He silent kept his place.
Silent meanwhile were gownsmen all
At least five minutes in the Hall
Full staring in his face.

He, blest with impudence enough
Now smil'd and now look'd grim and gruff,
At verses now would peep,
Now with cap tassel would he play
Now turn his body quite away
From where the Fellows keep.

Moulding, Vice Pres., with visage round
As is a cheese of twenty pound
Or moon in Harvest week,
Than these not boasting more pretence
To features emanating sense,
At length began to squeak.

Why, why, you stupid fellow, why
Are you thus silent, and not try
Your tongue for to unloose?
Better behaviour, sir, I beg.
You stand as foolish on one leg
As any silly goose.

This sharp reproof when Freshman heard
A moment at fat Moulding stared
Not knowing what to do:
But slow returning to his seat
He splutter'd out in rage and heat
"I ain't more goose than you."

Narrare finish'd and grace said
Vice Pres. and Fellows take the lead
And march away to wine.
We in our turn their steps pursue,
Gen. Coms., A.B's, and scholars too,
Where'er our steps incline.

For now some ten or dozen get
By 'fore appointment in a set
To taste inviter's port.
He glasses, plates and spoons prepares,
Decanters, knives and forks and chairs,
But each his own dessert.

For with large baskets enters soon
A wily fruitr'er styled Balloon
Who hands around his store:
Apples and pears and chestnuts too
And oranges deck'd out to view
With many a *bonne bouche* more.

Should guest from other college come
Of course the master of the Room
  Provides for his supply.
Our inmates carry to account
In Fruit'rer's book each day's amount
  Of what they taste or buy.

Meanwhile the jovial toasts go round
The bottles guggle, glasses sound
  As each one drinks his fair.
The Chairman watches, bawls and raps
Should any fill upon heel taps
  Or his good liquor spare.

At five, the Chapel bell again
Rings a loud peal: but rings in vain
  To move a single guest,
For whiles delightful they behold
Within all warm, without all cold,
  Each loves fireside the best.

At six, dame Prudence well may see—
It is high time to order tea
  If Prudence has her eyes,
But Bacchus, sly enchanter, draws
His hoodwink'd captive to his laws.
  In short—now none are wise.

For lo! they tea and coffee spurn
Whilst unsnuff'd the candles burn,
  Some hiccough and some snore.
The Chairman vainly strives to speak
And mouths his English worse than Greek.
  In short, the game is o'er.

At nine, the blinking Scout appears
Whilst most are nodding in their chairs,
  And bottles moves away,
For from the Kitchen he has brought
What each one sober might or ought
Have order'd—on his tray.

Boil'd fowl, salt herrings, sausages,
Cold beef and brawn and bread and cheese
With tankards full of ale.
The sated guests he with delight
Counts o'er—for this his perquisite
Is—when their functions fail.

Altho' in some respects he earns
The solace of these good returns
For putting them to bed,
As many a curse and many a kick
And many a pinch and many a lick
They give whilst being led.

Hush! Hush! cries Tom across Quadrangle
In lantern stuck his two-inch candle—
"The President will hear,
Be quiet Sir, and come along;
I wish you would not pull so strong,
Nor yet so loudly swear."

Yet my friend Will, you don't suppose
That thus alike all evenings close
And gownsmen are all such.
No, no! believe me, now and then
They will exceed like other men,
So did the grave phiz'd Dutch.

Warren and self in gloomy weather
Oft times a number get together
Immediately we dine,
Who sit and chat till half-past five
With jest and song are all alive
With quite sufficient wine.

Then Crotch [1] and two Musicians more
And amateurs near half a score
To play in concert meet.
Our chairs to Warren's rooms we move
And those who strains melodious love
Enjoy a real treat.

---

[1] William Crotch, *b.* 1775, *d.* 1847, composer.

Crotch as Director of the Band
On Harpsichord with rapid hand
Sweeps the full chord ; this youth,
Of late through Britain's realms was styl'd
The wondrous boy : Apollo's child,
And such he was in truth.

Whilst pause the Flutes' and Viols' sound,
The tea and toast are handed round
Till each has had enough.
And then brisk Punch and Lemonade
May suit when a full piece is played
Better than weaker stuff.

At half-past nine the supper things
In order Master Thomas brings
And puts them on with care,
For now the cunning rascal sees
He has a different set to please
Than those who tipsy are.

The cloth remov'd, some Negus sip
And some regale on hot egg flip
And some sing Catch and Glee.
For each in turn must something do,
Attempt old songs or bawl out new
By way of harmony.

Eleven strikes : and strangers strait
Pass to their homes thro' College gate
The Porter lets them out.
Meanwhile the rest to bed retire
Thus ends the day : and your desire
To hear what we're about.

APPENDIX II

MSS. OF THE JOURNAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM. JOURNALS OF TRAVELS AND PAROCHIAL MATTERS

33633.	Travels in Holland	1788–9
33634.	Sketches at Oxford	1790–7
33635.	Sketches in Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall	1797
33636.	Tour through Anglesea	1802
33637.	Tour along the South Coast	1804
33638.	Observations on the Roman Wall	1801
33639.	Sketches at the Lakes	1801
33640.	Sketches in Wales, Derbyshire, etc.	1803
33641.	Excursion from Camerton to London	1805
33642.	Sketches taken at Weymouth, Portsmouth, and Herts.	1804, 1809–10
33643–4.	Sketches taken at Clifton, Bristol, etc.	1811–12
33645.	Sketches taken near Calne	1812
33646.	Journal of Excursions in Somerset	1812–17
33647.	Journal of a Tour through Kent	1813
33648.	Journal of Excursions in Somerset	1814–16
33649.	Journal of Excursions to London and Sussex	1815
33650.	Journal of a Tour in Wilts, Monmouthshire, Isle of Wight, and Hants	1817
33651.	Journal of Excursions in Wilts, Somerset, and Gloucester	1818
33652.	Journal of a Tour in the Isle of Wight, Hants, and Wilts	1818
33653.	Journal of a Tour in Somerset	1819
33654.	"Iter. to trace Roman Road from Bath to Marlborough"	1819
33655.	Journal of Tours in Somerset	1818–20
33656.	Journal of Tours in Somerset and Wilts	1820
33657.	Account of Excavations at Wellow and of a Visit to Oxford	1820
33658.	Journal of a Tour to Brighton and Counties of Hants and Bucks	1821
33659–62.	"Camalodunum"	1819
33663–4.	"Camertonia"	1814–1819

33665.	Letters on Antiquities	1815–29
33666–7.	Extracts on Antiquities	
33668.	Wellow and Frome	1821
33669.	Tours in Somerset and Gloucester	1821
33670.	Tour from Bath to Winchester and Sussex	1821
33671.	Travels in Somerset and Wilts	1822
33672.	"Celtic Remains"	1821
33673.	Parochial Affairs	1822
33674.	Tours in Berks and Wilts	1822–3
33675.	Tours in Wilts and Somerset	1823
33676.	Tours in Somerset and Herts	1823
33677.	Tours in Somerset	1824
33678.	Tours in Gloucester, Hereford, and Worcester	1824
33679.	Tour from Cheltenham to Birdlip and Cirencester	1824
33680.	Visit to Great Malvern, etc.	1824
33681–2.	Glastonbury	1825
33683–9.	A Northern Tour	1825
33690.	Visit to Wells and Glastonbury	1826
33691.	Excursions in Somerset and Wilts	1826
33692.	Excursions in Somerset	1826
33693.	Essays on the Study of Antiquities by Analysis of Words, Names, etc.	
33694.	Camalodunum Restauratum	
33695.	Tour to London through Oxfordshire and Herts	1826
33696.	Excursions in Somerset	1827
33697.	Tour to Windsor, London, and Richmond	1827
33698.	Excursions in Somerset and Hants	1827
33699.	Tour in the Channel Islands	1827
33700.	Tour through Southampton, Wimborne, etc.	1827
33701–2.	Vallum of Ostorius in Somerset	1828
33703.	Excursions near Wells and Camerton	1828
33704–11.	Journal of French Tour	1828
33712.	Discovery of Roman Pavement at Pitney	1829
33713.	Excursions in Gloucestershire	1829
33714.	Journal of Western Tour	1829
33715.	Continuation of the same	1829
33716.	Bath	1829
33717.	Excursions in Somerset	1830
33718.	Roman Remains in Sussex and Somerset	1830
33719.	The Julia Via from Bath to Marlborough	1830
33720.	Journal of Visits to Bath	1831
33721.	Journal of Excursion to the Isle of Wight	1831

33722.	Excursion to the Isle of Wight	1831
33723.	Journal of Visits to Glastonbury and Wells	1831
33724.	Journal of Excursions in Somerset and Wilts	1831
33725.	Journal of Visits in the Neighbourhood	1832
33726.	Journal of Visits to Roman Roads	1832
33727–8.	Journal of Visits to Weston-super-Mare and Steepholme	1832
33729–30.	Index to Journals	1839

28793.	Copy of a Journal of a Tour to Wells, Bridgwater, Taunton, Exeter, Sidmouth, etc.	1797
28794.	Journals and Other Notes relating to Antiquities discovered at Camerton	1814–1819
28795.	Letters on the British and Roman Remains at Camerton	1815–1829

INDEX

Ackland, Sir John, 14
Alehouses (*see* Drinking): Alehouse Act, 11; disregard of instructions concerning, 44; new licences, 271; number of, 266, 273
Alexander, Lord, 191
Allen, Dr., 26
Allotments, Bishop's, 293
Allworthy, Squire, x
Arundel of Wardour, Lord, 75-6
Ashwick, 229
Axbridge, 189, 262

Bailey, Mr., 59
Baines, Dr., R.C. bishop, 51, 53, 54
Balloon, 66, 79
Bampfylde, Rev. C. F., 86, 111
Banwell Cave, 188, 286
Barber, Prior of Downside, 54
Barker, Benjamin, 66, 79, 254
Barlow, Dr., 234
Barlow, Rector, Weston-super-Mare, 263
Barrow, Isaac, 122, 199
Barter, Rev. W. B., xiv, 1, 2, 14, 16, 29, 72, 95, 99
Bath, *passim*
Bath Herald, 173
Bath and Cheltenham Gazette, 11
Bath Magistrates, 273
Bath and Wells, Bishop of:
    Dr. Charles Moss, x
    Dr. Richard Beadon, 57, 307
    Dr. Law, 133, 167, 176, 185, 188, 189, 190, 192, 209, 221, 224, 226, 230, 231, 232, 247, 256, 262, 263, 293, 307
Bellringers, 6, 14, 17, 35, 53, 73, 122, 212, 236, 249
Bennington, xi
Bible Society, 23
Blagdon, 286
Bonhams, *see* Catholicism
Boodle, Alfred, 283
Boodle, Mrs. (sen.), xvii
Boodle, Mrs., 196, 291, 296, 301
Boodle, Rev. Richard, v, 15, 33, 36, 57, 73, 82, 90, 92, 93, 102, 108, 116, 136, 196, 288, 309
Boodle, Mr., 45
Bowles, Charles, 75
Bowles, Rev. W. L., 188-9, 191
Boydell, 46, 265
Boyle, W. R. A., xii, xxii
Braysdown, 92, 268
Brent Knoll, x, 189, 263
Bristol: Fair, 255; riot, 291
British Museum, v, viii, xxii, 211
Brougham, Lord, 155, 172
Buckland Down, 74
Burrard, George, 206
Butler, Col., 259
Bumstead, Rev., 140

Cambridge, 213, 215, 234, 238
Camerton: Club, 222; Coal Works, 5, 39, 42, 59, 62, 80, 83, 154, 238, 245 (*see also* Strikes); Court, xi, 247, 264; Glebe Farm, 295, 311; Inn, 271; Poor House, 67; Rectory, xi; Schools, 23, 39, 58, 72, 80, 134, 144, 155 *seq.* (list of), 164, 200, 261, 281, 299, 300, 302; Sunday school, 23, 56, 80, 82, 85, 86, 87, 121, 157, 160
Campbell, Capt., 72, 133
Cassan, Rev. S. H., 101, 106, 188, 189, 191
Catholic Emancipation, 110, 116, 136, 218 (*see also* Ireland)
Catholicism, 46, 51, 52, 65, 76, 94, 110, 116, 136, 181, 200, 218; Bonhams, 76; Downside, 46, 53 *seq.*, 96 *seq.*, 121, 173
Champneys, Mr., 74
Chapman, Mr., 314
Charles II, 196
Cheam School, 276
Cheddar, 189, 262
Chewton Mendip, 61
Chilcompton, 61, 71, 186, 226
Cholera, 292, 296 *seq.*; at Camerton, 298 *seq.*
Churchwardens, 1, 2, 3, 113-14, 147, 217, 223, 242
Clandown, 60, 152, 266
Clarence, Duke of, 187
Claverton, ix, x, 46, 59
Clifton, xiii, xxi, 72, 116, 149
Coleford, 159

Collins, Mr. (miller), 14; Mrs., 61, 62
Collins, Rev. Trelawney, 198, 205, 264, 287, 290
Combe Down, 159, 288
Combes, Geo., 10, 271, 273
Coombes, Dr., 53, 55, 96, 97
Coombes, "Dr.," 96 *seq.*
Coombes, Rev. W., 96
Confirmation: notice of, 162; preparation and examination of candidates, 55, 56, 58, 85, 87, 98, 164, 167, 174; rite, 176
Coronation oath, 218
Court of Requests, 117, 118, 288
Coxe, Archdeacon, 196
Cranch, Mr., xvii
Crang, Mr. (apothecary), 26, 32, 56, 72, 95, 131
Cridlingcot, 18, 62, 130, 137, 144, 238
Crotch, William, 319, 320
Curtis, Mr. (surgeon), 43, 44, 297, 299

Dennis, Prebendary, 233
Dickinson, Wm., M.P., 37
Doctors (*see* John Skinner)
Douai, 97
Doveton, Rector of Mells, 280
Downside (*see* Catholicism)
Drinking (*see* Ale-houses, Licensing, etc.): cordial for grief, 48, 63, 133, 138; drunkenness 6, 8, 11, 27, 71; drunken newsboy, 172; drunken ringers, 112, 236; drunken singers, 8, 9, 11; haymakers, beer for, 171, 176, 201; John Jarrett's twenty-first birthday, 53; quarry accident, 44
Duncan, Mr., 231
Dunkerton, 45, 111; Devil of, 111
Durham, Bishop of, 51

Easter Communion, 146, 217, 241, 271
Eldon, Earl of, 264
Ellis, Sir Henry, v

Farleigh Castle, 33
Farleigh, Hungerford, 257
Farmborough, 249
Feare, Mr., 10, 67, 128, 139, 142, 144, 145, 197
Fenwick, Rector of Great Elm, 121
Fire: York House, 123; in Cridlingcott, 144
Floods: in chancel, 237; in cottage, 132; in hall, 157; near Bath, 179; near Wells, 189; near Writhlington, 181; Camalodunum, 130
Flower, Mr. (surgeon), 15, 43, 44, 56, 67, 69, 187, 297, 299
French Revolution (1830), 255
Frere, Mr., 171
Friendly Society Committee, 130
Frome, 74, 78, 159, 176
Fry, Misses, 71, 241, 246
Fry, Mr. (lawyer), 19, 20, 253
Fussells, 179

Gabell, Dr., 61
Garrick, Dr., xiii, xxi
George IV, death of, 249
Glastonbury, 204
Glossop, Mr., Rector of Wolverton, 177, 178
Gloucester, Bishop of (Dr. Ryder), 57
Gooch, Mr., 4, 7, 13, 15, 20-1, 29, 35, 49, 58, 88, 102-3, 106, 222, 253
Gooch, Mrs., 14
Goodden, Mr. J. P., 117
Good Friday, 146, 217, 271
Goold, Joseph, 26 *seq.*; letter to father-in-law, 31
Goold, Mrs. Joseph, 32
Gore, General, 22, 25, 39, 93
Gore, Mrs., 40, 66, 72
Gore Langton, Mr., 17, 92, 102
Graham, Mr., 66, 80
Graves, Rev. Richard, ix, x
Great Elm, 179
Gunning, Rev. Mr., 112
Gypsies, 262

Haggard, Rev. John, xi, xv
Haggard, Mr., 52, 60
Hammond, Rev. John, v, 32, 36, 69, 72-3, 102, 108, 115, 146, 175, 185-6, 193, 204, 206, 208, 211, 218-19, 220, 232
Hampden, John, 185
Hardwicke, 191
Henry I, 196
Hill, Lord, 247, 248
Hippisley, Sir John, 90, 92-3, 98
Hoare, Charles, 125, 146
Hoare, Henry, 14, 54, 63-4, 199, 292

Hoare, Peter (sen.), xix, 19, 24, 25, 36, 63, 74, 78, 101 *seq.*, 109, 179, 260, 292
Hoare, Peter (jun.), 83
Hoare, Sir Richard, xix, 17, 74-5, 78, 84, 101, 185, 189, 190, 192, 196, 209, 212, 223-4, 228, 283
Hoare, Richard, 146, 179
Holland, Dr., 45, 46
Holmes, Anna (*see* Skinner, Mrs.)
Holmes, Mr., xii
Howarden, Mr., 76

Ingram, Dr. (President of Trinity College, Oxford), 103, 115
Ingram, Mrs., 112
Ireland (*see* Catholicism): Catholic Emancipation, 98, 173, 181, 209, 270; famine, 1, 15; insurrection, 270; O'Connell, 173

James, Miss, 160
James, W. Coxeter, J.P., 33, 266
James's Powders, 72, 73
Jarrett, John, 36, 53, 104, 247, 251 *seq.*, 263-4
Jarrett, Mrs. (sen.), 103 *seq.*
Jarrett, Mrs., xvii, xxi, 4, 14, 17, 19 *seq.*, 30, 35-6, 38, 44, 48, 58, 59, 62, 69, 71, 95, 104, 123, 127, 129, 134, 138, 143, 149, 152-3, 156, 179, 222-3, 226, 241-2, 244 *seq.*, 254
Jarrett, Stephen, 30, 87, 125, 130, 164, 174, 187, 197, 202, 209, 247, 253, 294-5
Jolliffe, Thomas, 295
Journal: bequest of, v, 211; binding, 22, 234; care of, 41, 62, 79, 188; illustrates, 12, 99, 219, 268; remarks about, 276; thoughts on, 258, 266, 312; writes up, vii-viii, xxi-xxii, 107, 124, 126, 145, 176, 210, 246, 273, 277, 279

Kempis, Thomas à, 220
Kermel, Marquis de, x
Kett, Mr., 105, 314
Kilmersdon, 74, 94, 108, 116, 136, 295
King's Evil, 149, 151
Knatchbull, Mr., 36, 37, 102

Law, Archdeacon, 178
Law, Dr. (*see* Bishop of Bath and Wells)
Law, Misses, 256
Leprosy, 234, 256
Licensing: Ale-house Act, ii; attitude of John Skinner, 45; opposes new houses, 271, 273
Lincoln's Inn, ix
Lunn, Mr., 191

Maiden Bradley, 74
Manningham, Mrs. (*née* Laura Skinner): visits Camerton, 37; illness, 47 *seq.*; death, 52
Marriage Act, 36
Mead, Rector of Marston, 178, 231
Meadyates, 96-7, 164, 187, 198, 237, 271
Mells, 36, 74, 86, 108, 121, 122, 179, 280
Mendips, x, xix
Merick, Mr., 75
Methodism: chapels, 46, 144, 145; numbers of, xvi, 120, 144-5, 200; relations with, x, 11, 12, 23 *seq.*, 34, 38, 42, 55, 65, 77, 85, 115, 164, 288
Meyler's Library, 173
Meyler, Mrs., 173
Midsomer Norton, 62, 186, 194, 195
Monmouthshire, 196
Montgomery, 231
Morals of village: begging, 141; dishonesty, 65, 119, 139, 142, 179, 201, 254; illegitimate children, 50, 93, 147; marriage, 238, 240, 248, 270; murder, 119; obscenity, 141, 261; prostitution, 94, 134, 135, 261
Moss, Mr., Sub-Dean, x
Moulding, Mr., 317
Moysey, Archdeacon, 14, 16 *seq.*

National School, 57-8, 62 (*see also* Camerton)
Neale, Sir Harry, 187
Newton, 102
Norman, Dr., 282, 288-9, 290, 303, 305
Nunney, 74, 101, 179, 295

Oakhill, 71
O'Connell, Daniel, 173
Offley, Mr., 75
Old Down Inn, 127, 226, 234
Orchardleigh, 74

Oxford, 88, 103, 106, 112, 128, 130, 140, 213, 214, 234; Christ Church, 314; Trinity College, ix, 100, 105, 112, 115, 213, 214, 309, 313 *seq.*
Oxford Movement, vii

Page, Elinor, 232, 295-6
Page, Harriet, xiv
Page, Mary (*see* Skinner, Mrs.)
Parish, Captain and Mrs., 35, 264
Parrett, River, x
Paulton, 188, 238, 266, 297
Phelps, Mr., xi
Political Union, 291
Poor Law, 27, 50, 67, 70, 93, 108, 119, 177, 198, 281
Powell, Maria, 227
Priddy, 61
Prisons, 86-7
Priston, 102, 108, 146, 204, 206, 207, 249
Prowse, Rev. John, xi, xii, 231
Public Schools, 79, 80, 86
Purnell, Squire, 1, 17, 38, 55, 59, 64, 65, 80, 87, 143, 144, 148, 150, 152, 171, 181, 222, 269, 296

Radford, 61, 130, 132, 141, 154
Radstock, 15, 33, 36, 57, 73, 93, 119, 137, 160, 194, 196, 208, 266 (rioters), 287 (church)
Ranters, Society of, 157, 159
Red Barn murder, 185, 194
Repton, Mr. and Lady Elizabeth, 263, 265
Richardson, Mr., 33, 181, 182, 184, 255, 257
Rodney Stoke, 61

Sacraments, neglect of, 177
Salisbury, 251
Sandhurst, 100, 106-9, 128, 198, 258
Savage, Capt. and Mrs., 62, 186, 194
Scobel, Capt., 16, 53, 55, 83, 92, 124, 126, 170
Scott, Sir Walter, 232, 234, 236, 298
Sennett, Miss, 48
Seymour, Capt., 101
Seymour, Lord Francis, Dean of Wells, 101
Shaw, Dr., 24
Shepton Mallet, 86, 97
Shortwood, 98
Singers, 8 *seq.*, 22, 96, 235
Sion Hill School, 26
Skinner, Mrs. (*née* Anna Holmes), wife: marriage, xii; illness, xiii; death, xiv; tomb, xv; picture of tomb, 210
Skinner, Anna (daughter): allowance, 183, 254; birth, xii; carriage accident, 214 *seq.*; dances, 80, 124, 126; dinner, arranges a, 264; household management, 138, 170, 172, 180, 259, 276 *seq.*; journal, helps with, 219; marriage, xxii; nurses Joseph, 308; quarrels, 257 *seq.*, 276 *seq.*, 311; riding, 237, 274, 296; school, 48; teaches, 140; Weston-super-Mare, visit to, 283 *seq.*
Skinner, Eliza (sister): nurses Fitz Owen Skinner, xii
Skinner, Eliza Tertia (daughter): death, xii
Skinner, Emma (sister): nurses Fitz Owen Skinner, xii
Skinner, Fitz Owen (brother): death, xii *seq.*
Skinner, Fitz Owen (son): birth, xii; burial of pigeon, 84; Cambridge, 213, 215, 239; childhood, xvii; dancing, 79, 124, 126; drinking, 152; expenses, 149, 216, 234; fishing, 59, 163, 217; future, 88, 187, 199, 203, 209, 219; ill-health, 90, 131 *seq.*, 142; Journal, entrusted to him, v; Oxford, 103, 105 *seq.*, 112, 121, 128, 214; quarrels, 161, 163, 164 *seq.*, 171, 182, 220, 257, 275 *seq.*, 308 *seq.*; reading, 99, 100; repents, 203, 260; Southfield, visit to, 109; speech, impediment in, xvii, 73, 98, 204; tything, 161, 211; Weston-super-Mare, visit to, 285; Winchester, goes to, 47, 60; Winchester, influence of, 258; Winchester, returns from, 54
Skinner, John:
  Ancestry, ix, 272; birth, ix; school, ix; Trinity College, Oxford, ix, 105, 309, 313 *seq.* (*see* Trinity College and Oxford) Lincoln's Inn, ix; ordination, x; curacy, Claverton, x; curacy, South Brent, x, 263; Camerton Rectory, presented to, xi; marriage, xii; death of wife, xiv; wife's tomb, xv, 210; children (*see*

Skinner, John (*continued*):
Laura, Fitz Owen, Anna, Joseph Henry, and Eliza Tertia; persecution, 110, 113, 131, 273, 281; health, spitting blood, xvi, 224; health, blood pressure, 210, 277, 284; death, viii, xxii
In Church and Parish:
baptism, 108, 129, 130, 137, 147, 167; care of friendless and oppressed, 32, 40, 45, 59, 61, 67, 68, 170, 230, 269, 282; churchwardens (*see* Churchwardens); confirmation (*see* Confirmation); Communion, 122, 125; Communion of sick, 18, 145, 187 (*see also* Easter Communions); education, xx; views on education, 58, 59, 140 (*see* Camerton Schools); Good Friday (*see* Good Friday); Methodism (*see* Methodism); pestilence, in face of, 298 *seq*.; prayers for sick, 241; Ranters (*see* Ranters); ringers, row with (*see* Bellringers); Sabbath observance, 65, 146
sermons: own—Ordination sermon, x; on Methodism, 23; on Education, 58, 59; on Baptism and Confirmation, 85; on Private Prayer, 91-2; on Neglect of Communion, 125; on Practical Religion, 161-2; on Calumniating the Clergy, 281; on Pestilence, 300
singers (*see* Singers); Sunday school (*see* Camerton Schools); testimony of old parishioner, 263; visitation of the sick, *passim*, 6, 13, 40, 48, 55, 63, 83, 96, 115, 129, 130, 132, 137, 139, 151, 187, 198, 208, 237, 252, 301, 306; cordials for grief (*see* Drinking)
Diocesan and Clerical:
Bishop (*see* Bishop of Bath and Wells); visitation, 176 *seq*.; Clerical Society, 94, 140
Tastes:
antiquities, xvii, 42, 50, 61, 101, 102, 189: meeting at Stourhead, 74 *seq*.; Camalodunum, xviii, 76 *seq*., 83, 84, 130, 227-8, App. II; excursions, App. II; dreamings, xvii; Stoney Littleton, xix, 17, 33
etymology, xviii, 25, 39, 88, 115, 140, 190-1; verses, 9, 190, 235, 250, App. I; sketching, 12, 201, 210, 219; love of animals, 193, 208, 272; Journal (*see* Journal)
Views:
on doctors, 218, 297; on magistrates, 118, 273; on newspapers, 250; on Roman Catholicism (*see* Catholicism); on Capital Levy, 270; on dining out, 154, 178, 204; on entertaining, 264; on novels, 237, 249; on Camerton, 139, 202; on whist, 117, 226
Financial:
income, 19, 128, 148, 184, 215, 294; Parsonage, xi, 38, 149, 152, 210; tythe, 132, 147, 161, 166, 175, 239; cummutation of tythe, 295; Woodborough tythe, 38; school-bills, 48, 60, 100, 108
Skinner, Joseph Henry (son): birth, xii; burial of pigeon, 84; carriage accident, 215 *seq*.; debts, 110, 198; drinks too much, 275; engages domestics, 170 *seq*.; future, 109, 115, 182, 219, 224, 234, 247, 254, 274, 295; hair curled, 234; illness, 282 *seq*., 298 *seq*., 303 *seq*.; paints, present of, 93; quarrels with father, 182 *seq*., 219 *seq*., 275; reading, 115 *seq*.; repents, 209, 222, 274, 279 *seq*.; Sandhurst, 100, 106 *seq*., 109, 128, 198, 258; school fees, 26; school, returns to, 59, 61; Southfield, visit to, 108 *seq*.; tything, 175, 239; Weston-super-Mare, visit to, 283
Skinner, Laura (daughter): birth, xii; funeral of mother, xiv; letter from father, xvii; school, xix; illness, xx; death, xxi
Skinner, Mrs. (*née* Mary Page) (mother): appreciation of, 261;

Skinner, Mrs. (*continued*):
  books, ix; illness, 26; Joseph, worrying for, 304 *seq*.; letters, 182 *seq*., 198, 200, 209; money, bequest of, 52; sympathy, 259, 261; visits to Camerton, 37, 246; visited by Skinners, 22, 41, 45, 48, 139, 214, 291, 298
Skinner, Robert (Bishop of Oxford): obiter, ix; devotion, 272
Skinner, Russell (father): obiter, ix
Skinner, Russell (brother): carriage accident, 215; concert, attends a, 232; death, 311 *seq*.; Downside, visit to, 54 *seq*.; illness, 283, 304 *seq*.; Journal, transcription of, vii, 63, 234, 311; marriage, attends Mrs. Gore's, 72; visit to Camerton, 37
Skinner, Samuel: attempts to get cadetship for Joseph, 115, 199
Skinner, William (brother): visit from John Skinner, x
Skinner, Mrs. William (sister-in-law): visits Bath, 159; visits Downside, 53
Smallpox, 95
Somerset, Duke of (Protector), 101, 102
Somerset, Lord Fitzroy, 247
South Brent, x, 263
Southcott, Joanna, 85
Spencer, Mr., 178
S. P. G., 286
Stephens, Mr., xi, xiv, 104
Stephens, Mrs. Anne, 132, 180, 202, 253
Stoney Littleton, xix, 17, 33
Stourhead, xix
Strachey, Mr. R., 229, 289
Strikes, 133, 244 *seq*., 265-6
Sunday schools (*see* Camerton)

Temple Cloud, 153
Timsbury, 2, 16, 60, 84, 99, 198, 204, 205, 206, 207, 273
Trinity College, Oxford, ix, 100, 105, 112, 115, 213, 214, 309, 313 *seq*.
Tunley, 234
Turnpike Trust, 90, 92
Twyford School, 26, 39, 61

Vaccination, 95

Waller, Sir Charles, 122
Wansey, Mr., 75
Warner, Rev. R., 174, 188, 191-2, 201, 231, 243, 307
Warren, xvi, 319
Wellow, 17, 71, 92, 238
Wells, x, 61, 189, 226, 289
Wesley, Rev. John, 85
Weston-super-Mare, 209, 262-3, 283-4
Widcombe, 60
Winchester College, 39, 60, 93, 100, 258, 276
Witchcraft, 237
Woodborough, 17, 92, 144, 148, 150, 269, 296
Woodforde, Rev. John, vii
Wookey Hole, x
Writhlington, 122, 181, 222

York, burning of Minster, 212

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